

·ALONG·THE·LINE·

By

E·W·SWAN





Class PZ3

Book .S9712A

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

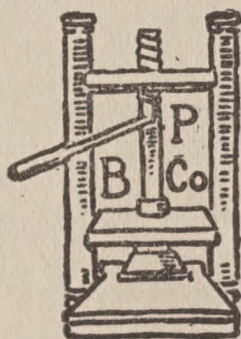
Along the Line

... or ...

Western Railroad Stories

... by ...

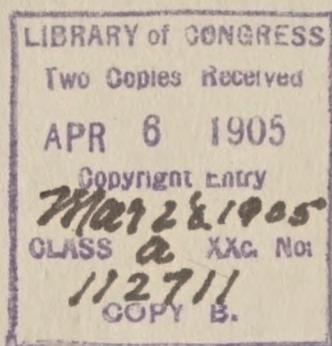
E. W. Swan



Broadway Publishing Company

835 Broadway, New York

PZ3
S9712A



COPYRIGHTED 1905

BY

E. W. SWAN

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

c
c c c
c c c
c c c

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE PASSING OF FIREMAN O'LEARY.....	I
WHEN THE TEXAN WAS YARDMASTER....	31
THE DUMB LUCK OF "WIDE-OPEN JIM"..	45
THE FATE OF THE 368.....	61
THE GOLDEN RULE TRAINMASTER.....	74
THE LAP-ORDER AT KENTON.....	85
THAT "SPOTTER" DEAL.....	109
THE FOREMAN'S ORDER.....	117

THE PASSING OF FIREMAN O'LEARY.

"WELL, McView, 'tallow-pot' evaporated?" bellowed the traveling engineer, as he climbed on the Woolverton "pusher" engine and scrutinized the interior of the cab with his eagle eye.

The engineer looked surprised, as though a ghost had entered the cab. "Naw; I guess he is up clearing out the front end, boss."

The engineer swung around and nervously wiped his oily hands with a bunch of waste, muttering under his breath, as his majesty, the traveling engineer, turned and looked down the left gangway, "That bloomin' brass collar is always koomin' up when he ain't wanted."

Just then "Buster" O'Leary, fireman, shot up the gangway as though he were making a center rush on the gridiron, and collided head-on with the traveling engineer; then, discovering the impediment, "Buster" offered the frosty apology: "Hi, there, stranger! 'Scuse me, but this is a poor time for visitors. I'm in a trifle of a hurry." And without further

2 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

pretensions as to who the "stranger" was, he flung open the porthole to the firebox, and began flourishing the scoop, when "the stranger" roared, with a tinge of contempt in his voice:

"Humph—m! One might imagine you were the boss of the whole blame system. I'd like to request that you take a reef in that 'trifle' of a hurry fit you are laboring under while I tell you that if I ever catch you with such a sloppy, smutty looking cab as this again you'll scorch for it. What in the Sam Hill—why, if you've run out of waste I'd advise you to use your shirt the next time, and scour a few layers of grease off that boiler head. Your cab windows, the whole bedaubed interior, looks like it had been smeared over with a fresh coat of lubricating oil."

The man with the authority proceeded to hand poor "Buster" such a bunch of compliments that the fireman felt himself shrinking into a Tom Thumb. A significant nudge from the engineer extinguished "Buster's" wrath, and was a forerunner of his conception that the "stranger" he was shoving in the clear was the traveling engineer himself. At first the fireman was too awestruck to speak, but the monster proceeded to rake him over the coals until O'Leary offered the rebuttal: "Well, say, now, captain, I just now took this engine. 'Tain't my fault that she ain't like

a bandbox. Jump on to the fellow who had it before——”

“What do you mean by leaving that firebox open all this time?” pointing to the open firebox. “Don’t you know that you’ve let enough cold air in there to warp the crown sheet?” stormed the official with a voice like an exploding safety valve. And “Buster,” in his effort to supplant grievances, banged the iron door with a vengeance. When he looked around again the most unwelcome “stranger” had disappeared.

As soon as he was out of hearing the engineer ushered in a low whistle. “Guess you’ll know that guy the next time he calls.”

“Buster” just donned a sickly grin. “I like to blowed my job. I never knew that was the man with the ‘atherity’ or I’d been more sociable like.” “Buster” was one of the fated sort of fellows—one of the kind who is always “caught with a fork in his pocket when it is raining soup.” The Woolverton pusher run was the first preferred trick “Buster’s” seniority won since he was promoted to fireman, and such a chilly welcome! “Buster” always seemed reconciled to the fateful turns in his career. That sickly smile was synonymous of another advent of hard luck, and “Buster’s” only good luck was that he wore that smile nearly all the time. It was that same characteristic smile that decorated his countenance

4 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

when "Buster's" foot was smashed. He then was "pulling pans" at the cinder pits; the same peevish grin that trimmed his Irish mug when, at the hospital, the jolly, good-natured surgeon squashed the foot back into shape and vowed that O'Leary was the pluckiest chap he ever handled, because he refused to take chloroform, preferring that heroic "grin-and-bear-it" measure. After the operation he patted O'Leary on the shoulder in a warm, fatherlike way, and said: "My boy, you're sheer grit. Your pluck will win some day." And yet "Buster" didn't take that statement to heart, but always did have a kindly feeling towards the big-hearted old doctor. The doctor was the only "higher life" railroad man who ever seemed to take any interest in "Buster," and during the week the fireman was "laid up" in the hospital ward, the congenial gray-haired surgeon always had a cheerful word for his patient.

"Buster" loved to recall those little incidents—encouragements. The recollections seemed to weld up in his bosom a longing to do something heroic and plucky. By the way, the breaking of "Buster's" foot was one of a series of accidents that came his way, and was responsible for the nickname, "Buster," which entirely supplanted his given name, if he ever had one. "Buster" was conscious that he was made up of the same kind of warp and woof

that constituted heroes, and if he ever got a chance it would "tell." That welding up in the bosom to do something great was, in "Buster's" eyes, seriously handicapped because he was only an extra fireman. He often fancied that if he were an engineer or train dispatcher he could grasp the opportunity and take a sudden plunge into fame. The story of how Chauncey Bleeker, an express messenger out of Woolverton, baffled a train robbery; how, although facing the business end of a revolver, Bleeker swung a lantern across the cranium of the robber and knocked him clean through the open doorway of the speeding express car, was idealistic from "Buster's" point of view. The knockout saved the Wells-Fargo from parting company with its little old chest of gold, and only cost Bleeker the chink of his anatomy which a bullet from the robber's revolver clipped out of his ear. The gold medal the messenger wore as a reminder of his bravery was to "Buster" an incentive for heroic accomplishments.

But those thoughts were only air-castles, and when the reality possessed the fireman that he was not a contractor and builder in that line, the plans and specifications of air-castles vanished, "Buster" just put on that satisfied grin—that he was only an extra fireman.

Again, with as much zeal as fired him at the sight of Chauncey Bleeker's gold medal,

6 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

"Buster" watched the engine men who had "pool" runs out of Woolverton, at work every day, running up their mileage, swelling their pay-checks, busy and happy. But "Buster" contented himself that he was the last man on the extra board. He daily eyed the shifting of the board, as interested as a ward politician at election. At times he was "ten times out," "nine times out," and when his turn "first out" came around and he saw on the board the name O'Leary and the specified time to start, he was "Johnny on the spot," brim full of his work.

The Woolverton pusher run was the first advertised run "Buster" ever ventured to put in a bid for, and his appointment to the left side of the pusher engine was heralded with as much grace as though the superintendent had chartered him a special car and a "brass collarette," or had tendered him an opening in the fireman's pool. The two looked about even honors to "Buster." (The required number of engine crews with the highest seniority constitutes the engine men's "pool." These crews are the favored crews, and are kept busy all the time, while the extra men have to take what is left. The extra man's job is an uncertain quantity. At times he is busy, and at times he has to wait a long time for his "turn out.")

For his first trip on the pusher, "Buster"

had just stepped aboard and conferred with his engineer, when the traveling engineer, whose "Yes" or "No" means a man's job, appeared and filed his colloquy. The traveling engineer's sentiments decidedly ruffled the fireman's pride. He felt like a cowed Shanghai rooster, unjustly cowed. He was big enough to throw two like the traveling engineer out of the cab window, but such a thought was only a passing fancy. That "atherity," as "Buster's" Irish called "authority," was a coat of mail on the official, and all concerned knew it. The fireman felt it was not his fault that the cab windows looked like the cross section of a tallow candle, that the interior was unkempt and the "old mill" wasn't steaming. The blame really was an asset of the fireman who superseded "Buster" on the pusher trick. Nevertheless, next day there was a yellow envelope for "Buster" in the engine room letter box. It was from the superintendent informing the fireman that his record had been decorated with a fringe of ten demerit marks—"Brownies" as they were known by the railroad men—because of the traveling engineer episode. This was a bigger pill than "Buster" could swallow. They were the first "Brownies" that ever soiled his record. He scrubbed up, and mustering all his reserve force of courage, smiled through his grief, took his grievance

8 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

and the awful yellow letter before the superintendent.

In the "main guy's" office he waded into such a chilly atmosphere he thought he had headed into a refrigerator, yet it was summertime outdoors. Fully five minutes he stood at the corner of the superintendent's roller top, waiting for a look of recognition. Finally the firm-jawed official's terse "Well, sir!" was the "go ahead" signal, and the fireman very timidly laid down his grievance.

"So you are the Fireman O'Leary who needs a few lessons in house cleaning before he will make a good fireman, are you?"

"Buster" stammered a protest, but the "brass collar" brushed him clear off the right of way, and turning half way around in his chair, donned a very pretentious air, and continued: "Look here, young man, how long have you been firing, anyhow?"

"Two months," whispered the frightened grievance committee.

"Huh! Now no doubt you mean all right; just don't know any better," and, measuring his words like a metronome, he added: "Traveling — Engineer — Bloomington — has — been — railroading — for the past thirty years," beating time with his index finger, "and if he now needs reproof at the hand of a two-month-old fireman, you might put in a bid for his job, don't you think so?" One

icy stare, with the "put-that-in-your-pipe-and-smoke-it" significance, and the superintendent dipped his pen, placed his elbows on his mahogany, and resumed his work. "Buster's" courage failed him, and he decided to back down for more fuel, so gave up his case, and started for the door feeling as insignificant as a boiled potato at an Irish barbecue. "Buster" went back to the scoop, that hard-luck smile ever playing its rôle. In fact, "Buster" felt so badly that he forgot that the smile was there at all. "The first demerit marks" was a constant tolling in his ears, and at times he tried to think that he did not care if he did lose his job. Then when the better side rotated uppermost, he felt he had a new ambition—to get rid of those ten "Brownies" was as important as getting a pool, and both were almost out of the question anyhow.

A week after "Buster" got the donation from the traveling engineer he was still on the Woolverton pusher. In the meantime a new engineer had been assigned to the pusher run. He was the latest appendage to the engineer's extra board, a new man on the division, yet an "old timer" at railroading; gray-headed, erratic, but with a big heart, if one was of a nature to reach it. "Buster's" temperament was that "happy-go-lucky" nature that could get along with anything in the way of cranky engineers, and he and his new run-

10 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

ning mate, "Dad" Grossman, "hitched" quite pleasantly.

The Woolverton pusher was an engine running between Woolverton and Hampton as a "pusher" to every freight train over the Runnyby Hill. Woolverton was a mountain-district division point and the grade west to Hampton was tremendously uphill. In fact, so steep was the track that tradition had it, there was a runaway train story for every mile post between Hampton and Woolverton. Woolverton was at the foot of the grade and Hampton just over the top to the west; Runnyby, from which the hill took its name, was a flag station that looked like a cliff-dweller's headquarters, half way between the two. It was storied that the first train that ever came down the mountain-side ran away, and the half-way point was named Runnyby because that train passed Runnyby with such lightning-like velocity that it probably would be going yet, had it not left the track four miles below Runnyby and piled up a frightful ruin—a death-trap to as brave an engine crew as ever went down with its ship.

It was an unwritten law that the operator at Runnyby must be able to prophesy just what time the next runaway train would reach there as readily as he could report scheduled matter; that at all hours he should have one

Passing of Fireman O'Leary. 11

eye out on the signal board looking for run-aways.

One Tuesday morning of a foggy, damp, dismal day the pusher hooked up to boost train No. 33, a red ball freight, over the mountain grade. The pusher engine, No. 077, was a third-class, old-fashioned scrap pile that would not make a decent "yard-goat" if foot boards were riveted to her. That morning old 077 behaved meaner than ever. Steam was at a premium. The man at the throttle was out of sorts. He worried about whether or not the sand box was full. Leaning out of his cab window he gazed nervously at the slippery rails, for they were covered with moisture; howled about the low pressure she had on, and "Buster" heaved away manfully at the scoop.

"Thirty-three's" orders at Woolverton read: "Make Hampton siding at 9:30. No. 5 close in. No. 5 will pass 'thirty-three' at Hampton."

"We'll have to put this old hulk in the shops and have her flues bored out before we make another trip with her," grumbled the engineer. "Might as well tack a dead weight onto 'thirty-three's' tail end. Huh, couldn't pull a settin' hen off the nest," and he threw the big lever forward and gripped the throttle. "'Buster,' it's a bad day for such a big tonnage up this hill. Rails are slick, awful slippery. Ever

12 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

have any runaways down that Runnyby incline?" the engineer questioned cautiously.

"Yes, lots of 'em," the stoker answered, and the question set him thinking. That was the pusher's part of the play—to guard against runaway trains.

The conductor wrapped the "all-aboard" signal about his head and the red ball freight No. 33, a solid "freezer" train, was under way. At Runnyby orders were handed out by the operator as the train sped past the flag station. It was a hurry-up story. No. 5 was making up time and would pass the freight at Hampton. The gray-haired "hog-head" looked worried. He kept muttering to himself. "Buster" only caught little smatterings of his earnest monologue: "Number 5 close in, and on a slippery hill like this. Fool dispatchers. Ought to be made to sand the greasy old track till they learn something besides making train schedules. We're on the blunt end of her, too," and automatically, the veteran occasionally gazed back at the ever-disappearing track, as though he expected to see No. 5 whizzing up the incline any minute.

Several miles up the grade were covered and the men in the pusher cab were silent. They took periodic glimpses at the steam gauge, but were not encouraged by the rate the indicator was creeping forward. The big decapod at the head end of the

train was just disappearing over the top of the grade. Suddenly the engine ahead "took up the slack" with a desperate lunge, and the next moment the rear end came to such a sudden halt that the pusher fireman, "Buster" O'Leary, in the act of throwing a scoop full of coal on the fire, almost took a header through the open firebox door. The engineer recovered his equilibrium, at the same time closing the throttle, and craned his neck out to see what was wrong. A "brakey" dropped off the way car and ran like a mad man towards the front end. The conductor at the time was in the cab of the head engine consulting with the engineer.

At the time of the pusher engine's sudden stop the decapod ahead lunged forward as if relieved of a burden. Grossman then saw the trouble. He turned his head and shouted to "Buster": "She's busted in two way up near the front end," and he jumped clear off his seat and opened the throttle wide. "For God's sake, 'Buster,' make 'er steam. We're in for it now. I doubt if we can hold 'er."

"Put 'er in the big hole, 'Dad,' and we'll try like pirates, anyhow," cried "Buster," every nerve alert with excitement as he shook the grates powerfully.

The gray-haired veteran at the throttle knew well what to expect. The worst had come. Slippery rails, a steep grade, a little

rattletrap of an engine behind half a thousand tons of rolling freight and no air brakes, for the pusher engine's air pump was not connected with the air channel of the freight train. The big decapod ahead furnished the air for the train's Westinghouse system. As the train broke in two, the brakes set, the hind part halted momentarily. But as soon as the air leaked out of the valves the long line of cars was a dead weight at the mercy of gravity. As the clamps on the car wheels released, the engineer in the 077 had the throttle "in the big hole" wide open. The little engine lunged forward desperately. Some of the cars ahead clanked together; unable to shove the entire train ahead—the story told. The engine drivers whirled round and round on the slippery track without any forward movement and the escaping steam panted in quick succession, rasping the air. The engine retracted for a second lunge. Again the drivers whirled about without advancing a foot. It was a struggle between gravity and the locomotive and the former was gaining ground.

The big decapod ahead continued its course. A pulled-out draw-head on one of the front cars of the train shifted the whole burden on to the little pusher engine, and despite its brave fight it was losing ground. The train began to roll down the grade, its movement almost imperceptible at first. Again and again

the 077 struggled against it, but in vain. The rolling weight as it were brushed back the engine's interference, and crushing its power, forced the locomotive down the slope.

"We're goners, 'Buster'; we're goners. God pity Number 5. That's all I can do. She's runnin' away," cried the engineer, his voice harsh and broken. He pointed at the wide open throttle and repeated, "That's all I can do; that's all I can do." He turned about on his cushion despondent, he looked at the floor, his face in his hands, and unseen to "Buster," a tear dropped from the old man's eyes. "God pity Number 5," again he reflected. The old man remembered the last train order—that the passenger train No. 5 was "close in," and would pass the freight at Hampton siding.

"Buster" stood as though riveted to the cab floor. At the first sniff of danger he was an uncertain quantity; unable fully to realize the situation. The fireman looked down pitifully on the bowed head of his gray-haired chief, and in his big-hearted way longed to relieve him. There was but one way.

The engineer raised his head; his face was pale and his appealing eye met the fireman's. Some one had to speak. The tallow-pot's intuition of the struggle in the old man's breast told him the engineer was on the brink, and

16 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

cautiously feeling his way, he asked, "Ain't you going to jump, 'Dad'?"

The question seemed to lift the burden; the old man rose to his full height.

"Yes, 'Buster,' I'm goin' to jump. 'T's the first time I ever deserted my post, lad, but what's the use? Done all I can. No air; no air," he shook his head despairingly. "God pity Number 5 and poor old Dick Hanson." (Hanson was the engineer on No. 5.) He stepped to the gangway, descended to the last step and clinging to the iron side railings, drew up for the leap.

"Heavens, already she's goin' like a streak. 'Buster,' you better jump, too," he earnestly advised, and leaving his engine to its fate, the old engineer disappeared in the mist along the right of way.

"No air, no air. God pity Number 5," "Buster" repeated to himself. Every minute since the train broke in two its speed was accelerated. It was fully thirty miles back to Woolverton, the foot of the grade, and the train a wild, stampeding runaway. "Buster," too, would jump. He went to the gangway with that intention, but with a sudden flush that heroic "Buster" O'Leary gained the upper hand.

"Why not connect that air," flashed through the fireman's mind.

Indeed, that was a heroic measure, and he

did not hesitate. Every drop of blood, every nerve, every muscle in him fairly tingled with the determination to see that measure through. In a moment, he was out along the running board, across the engine front to the pilot, and in spite of the bolting, jolting motion, he connected up the air tubes and opened the air cock between the pusher engine and the way car, the last car on the train. "Buster" then dashed through the way car up the ladder of the next car. Once on top he started away on the run for the other end of the train, forty-five cars away.

The train was now bouncing and rolling down the incline at a terrific rate. Once in a while "Buster" looked back,—that No. 5 order not a minute off his mind. Forty-five cars—the bigger part of a half-a-thousand-ton-train, uncontrolled, rushing down the grade faster and faster. "Buster's" plan was to reach the other end and close the air cock on the last car. Having opened the air cock between the engine and the way car, the closing of the other end would make the brakes ready for business, subject to the power of the air pump that chugged away frantically on the 077.

As "Buster" climbed down over the end of the car to close the cock, a somewhat acrobatic feat, the train flew past Runnyby station. The ever-watchful Runnyby operator, his eye on

18 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

the alert, saw the train retreating down the mountain slope and knew something must be wrong. He was waiting to hand the orders to No. 5, west-bound, and here from the west came thundering a mysterious, unheralded and unordered train at a rate that made it look like an unbroken streak as it sped past the little station. The operator all in a glance observed the engine drivers struggling one way, the power of gravity forcing the train the other. He saw the engine was deserted, no conductor or brakemen in sight. The position of the engine—the pusher—told him that the train was No. 33, and without waiting to see it pass he rushed to his key. The dots and dashes were rattled off like distant riflery.

An operator in the Woolverton depot sixteen miles below caught the startling message:

“Stop No. 5; stop No. 5. Runaway train; runaway train.”

No further information was necessary to complete the story, for No. 5 already had left the Woolverton yards and was driving up the grade at a tremendous rate, characteristic only of itself. From the opposite direction, in care of the lone, brave fireman who stayed by his post yet conscious of his perilous charge, willing to do or die, thundered a runaway train hurled in the grip of gravity; sped as if glorying in its strength, as if teeming with delight at its power of destruction should these two

giant forces meet; down the grade it swept. Both trains on the same track; the pluck of a nervy fireman, the only straw by which hung the fate of half a thousand lives on No. 5. If he succeeded, all's well. If he failed—his brave fight would never be learned by another, and what about No. 5's human freight? Would that tiny straw break? That message indicated the worst had happened.

When the message to stop No. 5 reached Wolverton, an operator in the Western Union room, the second story of the big Wolverton passenger depot, turned suddenly pale. With an unrestrained cry that brought the attention of all the other operators in the room to center on him, he jumped from his chair.

"Number 5 is wrecked," he yelled, and bolted out of the door and down the hall to the superintendent's office with the terrible news.

Traveling Engineer Bloomington and the superintendent were there in earnest consultation when the operator, his eyes staring like semaphores, burst through the door and fairly yelled:

"Number 5 collided with a runaway train between here and Runnyby."

The message burst like a clap of thunder in the head man's office.

"What?" snapped the superintendent, and he sprang to his feet with such force that his

20 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

straight backed chair turned a somersault on the floor. "What in d—nation you givin' us?" he remonstrated.

The operator breathlessly explained. The passenger train had been gone but a few minutes and making up time. A terrible catastrophe was inevitable.

The superintendent ordered out the "wrecker" and his special car in double quick meter. The head surgeon of the hospital, several younger heads and numerous stretchers were in readiness when the "steam wrecker" with its crew and many rescuers was "made up" for the start. The superintendent was a man of quick thought and correct purpose. But now he was slightly ill-tempered and nervous. No. 5 was one of the fastest, finest equipped trains in the service and over the Woolverton division always carried hundreds of passengers. The official braced himself to meet the worst. He had seen disastrous wrecks before. He, the traveling engineer and the benevolent-looking old doctor occupied one corner of the special car and scarcely a word passed between them after they left Woolverton—each expectant, as though he were uncovering the future and feared to look. It was but a few minutes when the special came to a slow down and stopped. The superintendent's heart leaped spasmodically, as he thrust his head out of the

window and looked ahead. He drew back quickly.

"Why, here is Runnyby and no wreck yet. There must be some mistake." The three officials hastened from the car. Sure enough, they had reached Runnyby and had not encountered the No. 5 wreck. An unpretentious-looking freight train stood on the siding and out of the engine cab window leaned a sooty-faced, blue-overalled fireman. He seemed to recognize the officials, and a ticklish smile played about his lips; but the officials did not even notice him. They went straight to the operator in the little red depot. Then the storm broke from a clear sky.

"Well, this is a thundering smart trick you have played on us! What did you mean by wiring that a runaway train had smashed into Number 5 somewhere between this shanty and Woolverton?"

"I—I thought it was inevitable," apologized the worried operator. "I just now wired Woolverton how it all happened."

"Oh, you 'thought' there would be a wreck, did you?" mocked the superintendent. "Young man, do you know how many men lose their jobs on this road every month just because they thought wrong. You have erred grossly. Have you anything to say about the matter? The report was considered as true, and because of it, this 'wrecker' was sent out. This

22 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

is abominable." The "brass collar" was on his metal and by the time he finished he was all in a bluster.

The operator then took up the charges in genuine Philadelphia lawyer style.

"Sir, it is all a lie," he retorted. "I did not wire Number 5 had smashed into a runaway. My message was to stop Number 5, because a runaway train was flying down the grade. As Number 5 had left Woolverton before the message was received, the conclusion was formed by yourselves. I did think the trains had collided and am yet scarcely able to tell how Providence averted it."

The interest of the officials set out in their faces.

"Just be seated, gentlemen, and I will call in that fireman; he can best tell his own story."

The operator stepped to the door and told the fireman, with the blue overalls and the sooty face, who graced the cab window of the unpretentious freight on the siding, that he was wanted inside. "Buster" O'Leary stalked in, "feeling his oats" just enough to have that feeling frightened when he came face to face with the officials. His upper-cut smile was unusually conspicuous. His regalia, and the generous amount of coal dust smeared over his countenance, gave "Buster" a typical "tallow-pot" aspect.

The superintendent had completely calmed. He saw the point. Yet his was that precise nature to ferret the matter to a standstill.

"Buster" then told his story—how he connected up the air between the pusher engine and the way car; ran to the other end of the train and just as the train sped past Runnyby, in spite of the rolling, jolting cars, he climbed over the end of the last car and turned the air cock. "This closed up the air channel," jubilantly crowed "Buster." "Then I chased back over them freezers—well, I guess there was about forty of 'em—back into that engine cab, closed the throttle and give 'em air. You know all the time that bloomin' engine was driving one way and them dead weight cars was rushing it t'other way, 'cause there was no air. I put on the air and give 'em sand and jimminy, you ought to seen 'em come in! Th' air brakes once set, all them cars didn't have any more runaway notion left than a snail in a snow drift. I tell you it was a claw bar cinch. Them wheels never turned a lick. Just grated down and down; slower and slower, till the rascal came to a standstill about five miles below Runnyby. I tell you that Number 5 order had me shiverin' most of the time, but I stayed with her till she stopped, dead still; then I grabbed a red flag and lit out down the track, oh, 'bout a few hundred yards to meet Number 5, and sure enough,

24 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

I halted that runaway just in time, 'cause Number 5 came 'long right away and I flagged her.

"When I told Dick Hanson (he was on Number 5) what had happened, he was so glad he almost bawled, and he made me take that as a reminder of my ride," and "Buster" gleefully exhibited a much-worn, sooty five-dollar greenback which he pulled from his overall pocket. "'Ole Dick' said I had saved his bacon and maybe the lives of all them passengers he was leading up the mountain, just because I stayed with that train and didn't jump—but I never thought I was doing anything so awful great.

"The passenger engine coupled up with my pusher and helped back the runaway train, and yonder she is out there on the siding waiting for orders."

For several minutes after O'Leary finished his story, the barren little room of the Runnyby station was still as a graveyard except for the occasional rasping click, click of the telegraph key. The three officials had been interested, yes, astonished, and with ears and eyes open, they drank in every word of the fireman's story. Now a thoughtful silence reigned. The superintendent stroked his stubby mustache and looked steadily through the open door. The dignified old doctor with head erect, his fat chin drawn in, gazed wide-

eyed at "Buster." With jaws slightly ajar, the traveling engineer blankly studied the patch of soot on the fireman's cheek.

The superintendent broke the silence.

"What went with your engineer; suppose he jumped like a coward," he ventured demurely.

"Oh, with 'Dad'? Why, yes, he jumped, but—but—'e—I made him."

"You made him? How's that?"

"Well—eh—you see, we saw she was running away, and 'Dad' mentioned that Number 5 was coming and——"

"He was afraid to face the music, eh?" enjoined the superintendent.

"Don't—you—think—it. I told him to jump or I'd throw him out. There wasn't no use of both of us bein' made into sausage meat, so he jumped before she got a very heavy head-on." "Buster" knew the statement was false in part, but his motive was meritorious at least. That "story" saved "Dad's" job.

"And why didn't you jump, too?" the official inquired further with manifest interest.

"Well, to be honest, boss, I did come mighty near it. I got as far as the gangway when I 'lowed maybe I could connect that air. Then I just couldn't jump, 'cause all the time I was thinking of Number 5, and the hundreds of lives it was swishing up that track; and, you bet I thought of that one lone 'tallow-pot'

26 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

on that runaway train, dashing down that mountain-side." "Buster" grew oratorical. "I knew my life wasn't worth nothin' in comparison with that train load of humans. It looked like about a thousand-to-one game that I would lose, but I played it out on that one chance, and it so happened as to postpone my funeral for a while, anyhow; and I couldn't help from thinkin', after I was on that sidin' there, and that passenger train chased by me, and I saw those seats filled with fine men and women who never even scented danger, that it was a mighty good risk I run. Tell you it was old man X. Westinghouse that deserves their thanks. It was them air brakes that saved the day. Jimminy, they worked like magic!"

"No, I think that lone fireman deserves all the honor," meditated the traveling engineer, and the other officials promptly sanctioned his decision.

Another silence. The superintendent shifted his position and addressed the fireman in a kind, contented tone of voice.

"Young man, you do not seem fully to realize it, but your genuine grit and presence of mind, beyond a doubt, have averted a most disastrous wreck, not to mention the loss of life that would have followed had not that runaway train been stopped. I tell you runaway trains are hell," and he emphasized his

last word with a resounding thump of his fist, on the table at his elbow.

"As head of this division, I take the responsibility of saying that your valuable service will not go unrewarded. I will report it to the president." A brief pause. "Yes, sir, that was one of the pluckiest, bravest, most handsome deeds I ever ran across in my thirty years of railroading."

"Buster's" characteristic grin framed in a much wider expanse of ivory than was customary. His heart was buoyant. It was the calm after the storm of excitement—that serene feeling of "well done, good and faithful servant." The superintendent again took up the case. The more he thought about it, the more it worked up his admiration for the fireman.

"How long have you been firing, O'Leary?"

"Little over two months, is all."

"Think you can run an engine?"

"Well, I can run one, but I don't know much about its tinkerings and contrivances. I can handle that 077 till I catch my 'eagle-eye.' 'Spect he hoofed it to Hampton. But I'll want another engine ahead, you bet. Don't want any more runaway trains in mine."

Finally "Buster" "caught on":

"Oh-h—Well, boss, I ain't got enough whiskers to be a real engineer." ("Whis-

28 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

kers," is the common name for seniority, with railroad men.)

"Whiskers and be darned. Can't I give you a whole Blue Beard if I want to? How would you like to be promoted to the engineers' board, and take a little special training to make you competent?"

"Buster's" lower jaw dropped, and for a while he had to get out a search warrant for his voice.

"Why, why—eh, boss, I'm afraid that's too much," reflected the fireman, as he scratched his head for thoughts. "'Fraid I've too much to learn before I'd make an engineer."

"Well, suit yourself. Name anything on the whole system, and it's yours, just so you don't 'bump' the superintendent," laughed the seldom laughing official.

"Buster" went into a dark brown study for a few moments, during which he seemed to have stirred up a happy thought.

"Tell you what: I'd like to compromise with you. Put me in the firemen's pool, and knock off those 'Brownies' you gave me some time ago, and I'll call it square, and then some."

"Done," agreed the superintendent. "You will have a pool and a clear record as soon as I get back to Woolverton." He rose, and putting his hand firmly on the fireman's shoulder, said: "God bless you, lad. I hope you feel rewarded."

The operator handed the superintendent some orders and the officials started for their car; left "Buster" grinning no longer that old hard-luck smile—and pinching himself to see if his wind-fall was a dream or really was true. But he didn't have to pinch very many times.

A fortnight after the runaway train raced down the Runnyby hill a gold medal from the president of the road, accompanied by a personal letter from him, was forwarded to the Woolverton superintendent, to be presented to Fireman O'Leary. It was one somewhat like the coveted gold medal owned by the express messenger, Chauncey Bleeker. The O'Leary medal bore in hand-engraved words, "To Dennis O'Leary, fireman, in high appreciation of meritorious service. From the Rocky Mountain Railroad Company, 1890."

The strange thing about the medal is that it never reached O'Leary. The pretty gold medal, still hanging above the desk of the Woolverton superintendent, is the nucleus of a story that has been told over and over again by the men on that division. Why that gold medal should decorate the wall of the superintendent's office instead of the person of Dennis O'Leary, was an intricate enough a question to turn the average man into an interrogation mark.

The superintendent pointed to the gold medal as "my temperance story." For a week

30 Passing of Fireman O'Leary.

after "Buster" O'Leary won his stripes, he "lay off duty." Every one talked about the runaway train hero; the newspapers spread it; the railroad officials gossiped over it; the operators in their spare minutes flashed it over the wires. All this turned O'Leary's head, and like many others, his better self was smothered to death by his own glory. "Buster" topped off that week of elation with his first drunk. He wasn't satisfied with kicking his foot through a plate-glass window of an uptown saloon, but went to the yards and ran amuck in a passenger train; locked the conductor out of doors and made a fool of himself generally.

The next morning, after sobering up, O'Leary didn't take the formality of tendering his resignation. His sense of shame and disgrace directed him. He packed up his effects and left—for where no one ever knew, as far as the superintendent was able to find out. The gold medal arrived a few days after his departure, and there it still hangs, keeping alive the story of O'Leary's heroism, likewise his fall; how O'Leary mastered the runaway train, and anon how bad whiskey mastered O'Leary. And that's why "Buster" lost his pool.

WHEN THE TEXAN WAS YARDMASTER.

A "WINDY" WALKER STORY

AFTER "Windy" Walker, fireman, had flourished the scoop shovel on the Pollywog branch passenger run several years, the division foreman gave him a job running a switch engine preparatory to an examination for engineer.

It took "Windy" to tell stories. In fact, to that talent he owed the significant sobriquet, "Windy." And after "Windy" took the switch engine job, his association with the switchmen was, of itself, a good reason for enhancing his accomplishment of exaggerating facts until they wouldn't recognize their own proportions.

One of the deals that made "Windy" Walker a friend of the switchmen was once when he relieved them of the uncomfortable and necessarily dangerous positions of imitating a gang of Spanish bull-fighters. The details of the excitement in the yards the morning a raw-boned, red-eyed, long-horned Texas

32 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

steer impudently assumed the responsibilities of yardmaster, certainly make a thrilling story, and as Walker was the hero of the day, it is only just dues that, whenever any one wants to hear about what the Texan stirred up, the switchmen would call in "Windy," and tell him to loosen up his vocabulary.

"Well," hesitated "Windy," in relating the tale about when the Texas steer ran riot in the yards, "about the first thing that impressed me that morning was, that when a man gets his wits balled up good and big, his hair really does stand on end.

"We had a brawny, rough-necked Irishman, named O'Harrety, slamming switch stands in the east end, and the first thing I saw of that long-horned Texas skeleton, was when O'Harrety came down the line along a string of box cars on 'six' track, at a scared-to-death pace. That Irishman had an elaborate flow of Irish-English when he wasn't flustered, but laboring under excitement, O'Harrety's tongue had nervous prostration. One would have reckoned the devil and all his hired men were on that Irishman's trail. His hair looked like the bristles on a curry-comb, 'nd he was wavin' his hat and yellin' loud enough to wake up a cemetery. The gang about the shanty door naturally got curious, and began rubberin' in O'Harrety's direction, 'nd all of a sudden, when that pale Irishman was about close

When the Texan was Yardmaster. 33

enough for us to whistle down brakes, so he could make an explanation as to why he was overdoin' the yard speed rate of six miles an hour, we got the first glimpse of a Texas steer, all horns and two bleary eyes, as he swung around the corner of the nearest string of cars, and headed down the lead for the shanty. The way we fellers helter-skeltered into that switch-shanty wasn't at all slow.

"O'Harrety was a few lengths in th' lead of the steer, and when I seen he was makin' a bee-line for the door, I stood inside and held it part way open for him. That Irishman didn't stop at the door, either. He sort a-tripped on the sill, and his speed was geared so high that he landed like a chunk of mud up against the opposite wall, then fell on to the bench along the wall with a groanin' breath that sounded like his safety valve had popped open and he was just puffin' out excess power. 'Course, I slammed the door shut, so that mean-looking Texan wouldn't take a notion to follow.

"But, talk about your head-end collisions! I have been in one or two myself, but they was just little love-taps. That cussed steer made a header for that shanty door—nothin' could stop him. I, like the rest of the fellows, was laughin' at the scared Irishman, when, whop! Somethin' landed up against that door. I thought mebbly it was a runaway engine. Y'

34 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

see, I was tryin' to hold the door shut, and that swat jarred me up hard enough to give my great-great-grandfather the shaking palsy. That old door went to pieces so fast I couldn't keep track of the pieces. Tell you, about that time I wasn't able to keep track of myself. I think I must have hit the ceilin'. Anyhow, I came down across the top of the stove with part of the stove-pipe gracefully wrapped about my neck. I didn't stop to see how many cracked ribs I had or whether the stove was worst hurt than I was, but after the stars and stripes had cleared off the right of way of my eyesight, I saw at a glance, a pair of feet disappearing out each window, and that I was alone in the cabin.

"But imagine my state of mind when I looked around and saw there in the doorway, the countenance of that wild-eyed rack-o'-bones, hind hoofs up in the air and front ones pawin' dirt all over the railroad track, a-figurin' how to get a pair of six-foot horns through a three-foot wide doorway. Thank goodness, that old boy's geometry was a slow process sort, and by the time he had figured out what angle to slant his horns to get inside, I had followed O'Harrety through the open window. I made my get-away in such a hurry, that I probably would have plowed a furrow through the cinders with my chin, if I hadn't a-lit head first on O'Harrety's bread-basket.

When the Texan was Yardmaster. 35

It like to winded him, but without dallyin' to see whether he had lost his breath, false teeth, watch, head, or any other staple and fancy valuables, we hiked off to my engine which was standin' in front of the shanty; and after I was up in the cab, I wasn't dead certain that steer wasn't followin' me till I heard him bawlin' and scatterin' destruction inside the shanty. He got inside, all right. 'Spect he thought it was terribly impolite of us not to've been there to receive our guest, so he took his vengeance out on the furniture, which was a mighty hard matter to get satisfaction out of, I'll bet.

"The Texan finished dilapidatin' the stove, incidentally slashed the points of his hookers through all the window lights of the establishment and when he stalked out of the door, he carried the back of a busted chair on one horn, and from the tip of the other, jauntily suspended by its wire hanger, was a picture of an actress, a theatre poster that one of the switchmen had framed and hung up in the shanty.

"About that time we began spreadin' the alarm and wonderin' how many partners he had runnin' at large, but he seemed to be the only Texan out. It was along in the spring of the year, when the shipments of Texas cattle to Kansas ranges are pretty numerous, and we sort o' decided that that murderous-look-

36 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

in' pair of horns must have escaped from some cattle car, by crawlin' through the slats, and that steer was certainly bony enough to. I'd always heard that when a genuine Texas steer, and especially a hungry one, gets on the war path, he goes plum crazy, and the insane asylum was certainly the only place for that wild-eyed beast. Tell y' what, that critter was on a man hunt. He paraded about the yards, and every time he caught sight of a switchman, or any one else, for that matter, the dirt began to fly. The switchmen did the Spanish bull-fighter act to a finish. Their chief get-away when the green-eyed monster made an unexpected sally on them was to dodge in between the ends of two box cars. When the cars are in a train you know there is a space between them of about eighteen inches, and the steer couldn't get to 'em. But he would smash up against the cars, though, if he could not hit the switchmen. He wouldn' stop at nothing. If a feller would dodge behind a stone wall, I guess he'd just as soon plunk into the stone wall as the pine door of that old switch-shanty.

"Well, the rascal slam-banged around there until he had a corner on the switchman market. Anyhow, he had all the switchmen cornered. Things began gettin' in pretty bad shape. The yards were gettin' blocked. The freight trains kept pullin' in until there were

When the Texan was Yardmaster. 37

no tracks to hold them and no trains were be-in' made up to amount to anything.

"Switchman O'Harrety's individual excitement had reached such high pressure that he was architect for some mighty reckless, dare-devil plans. He got a rope from somewhere; said he used to be somewhat of a cowboy himself, and would see if throwin' a lasso was a lost art to him. Well, he had the good luck to 'get next' real soon. He spied the steer coming down alongside a string of box cars, so he gets on top of a car and waits cautious-like till the steer comes along. As soon as he had passed a little ways, O'Harrety drops the loop over one horn and then braces himself for trouble. The funny thing about it was that just about that time, that wanderin' skel-eton caught sight of a blue-shirted switch-man, a few car lengths away, who had got interested in O'Harrety's scheme and stepped out in the open to watch results, and they certainly were worth watchin'.

"'Course, the steer was up on his toes after that blue shirt, straight away, and was mak-in' about three hundred revolutions a minute when he got to the end of the rope. All of a sudden it became taut. Before it happened, OHarrety saw there would be somethin' do-in', and he took an extra brace for the recoil, lay back on the lasso for dear life. And for about a minute, I guess, he wondered whether

38 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

he had any dear life or not. He was jerked off that car for about two full, regulation-sized somersets towards the steer, and at the same time, the steer threw the reverser and made a backward flip-flop in the air. Fortunately O'Harrety didn't light very hard in his acrobatic stunt off the box car. When he and the steer regained their equilibrium, they came up face to face only a few feet apart. I don't know which was frightened the worst, but I think the steer was. They looked blankly at each other for a second, as if wonderin' how it all happened, and the beast bawled out a bum note, whirled about and started after the blue shirt he had his lookers on before that sudden interruption.

"The Irishman was glued on to that rope, though, and the steer soon discovered that its energy was in the wrong direction, so again he wheeled about, and charged on O'Harrety. Old Ireland seemed to think it was a foregone conclusion that the two ends of the rope had to pull in opposite directions, and when he saw the steer with pilot pointin' his way, head down, and tail over the dash-board, he just stood there as though waitin' for some one to wave a red light before he could smell danger. That Irishman had stage fright. He bunched his wits, though, soon enough to head in under a box car, just in time to fight shy of that pair of vicious snags. O'Harrety de-

When the Texan was Yardmaster. 39

cided lassoing' wasn't just exactly his profession, and gave it up.

"Only one fellow was caved in by that wild-eyed Texan that mornin', and it made a selection that pleased the switchmen mighty much. You remember old Webb Moore, that brass-voiced, brow-beatin' extract of humanity? Well, he was yardmaster then. He happened to look out over the yards from his office window and saw the yards were blocked up pretty badly. He threw a fit and came chasin' down the line, bawlin' half as loud as the old steer was. When he saw what was up, he meandered over to where the gang was and wanted to know what in the deuce the yards were all blocked up for. He found out mighty soon, too. 'Lord' Moore thought it a shame that a lot of men should be buffaloed, scared from duty by as frail a lookin' specimen as that old Texas ranger, so he started in to 'shoo' the long-horn off the premises, just like an old woman would charge down on a flock of chickens if they were scratchin' in her flower-bed.

"But the steer didn't 'shoo.' Moore made a bold dash at first, but when he saw the critter didn't take to the timber, he slackened his pace. The steer just kind o' watched him out of the corners of his wild-lookin' optics until Moore got pretty close. Then all in a jiffy that four-footed stranger let out a vicious bawl and went through the air with the throttle

40 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

wide open. Moore didn't more 'an get turned around, than the steer landed on his 'dead wood,' and I'll be jostled if his majesty, the yardmaster, didn't roll about twenty feet, and after he had reached a slow-down, he had sense enough to roll himself over a time or two more, which put him out of reach of the steer, in under a box car. And if he hadn't a-gotten under the box car, it certainly would have been time for the accident insurance man to come 'round, for that animule just kept right after him. When he saw he couldn't touch him, Mr. Steer moseyed on down the track with blood in his eye, still lookin' for big game.

"Well, the bunt that cactus-fed steer shoved onto 'Lord' Moore, certainly took a few kinks out of his self-respect. The switchmen felt like passin' the hat to buy the old steer a bucket of bran, but, of course, they couldn't afford to give way on their sentiments like that. As soon as Moore had coupled himself together, he crawled out from under that car and swore vengeance. The switchmen could not help givin' him the horse laugh about shoo-in' away the steer, and he couldn't hold back from grinnin' right foolish-like all the time he was belchin' out cuss words big enough to wreck a train.

"Moore went straight to a restaurant not far off and borrowed a Winchester rifle; said he would sure clean up for that brute. He

dodged about among the box cars until he got a good bead on the steer. And just about that time the steer got a bead on the yardmaster. Moore up and blazed away. He never touched the steer, but the bullet whispered somethin' in a switchman's ear a few car lengths away, and brought out a powerfully bold stream of cuss words about what a fool the yardmaster was. The yardmaster, though, about that time was engaged in other pursuits than listenin' to a loud-mouthed switchman; good thing for the switchman's standin' with the company that he didn't hear, too. Moore blazed away a second time at the string of bones bearin' down on him. I don't believe the yardmaster could hit a flock of barns, let alone that steer, 'cause it was built on the narrow gauge plan and when comin' straight at a fellow it was just like shootin' at a string. Of course, the second shot went wild. It was about time for a bayonet charge or to swing clubbed muskets, but Moore, in a very hasty manner, laid aside his arms and was in full retreat. It certainly was another Bull-run, or steer-run, as you like it. Moore managed to find a timely life-savin' station between the ends of two box cars.

"I had gotten a-thunderin' lot of amusement out of this wild animal show and kind o' hated to spoil the fun, but it looked like somethin' had to be done. Excitement was rife about

42 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

the place and there was mighty little work be-in' done. A lot of shopmen were up on top of the round-house, takin' a bird's-eye view of the maneuvers, and the men from the freight house, wonderin' why the switchmen hadn't brought some freight cars down to the platform to empty, had come down to the yards to find out what the agitation was and were lined up on some box cars watchin' the fun. Some one 'phoned uptown for a policeman,—but, of course, a copper wasn't expected to show up on the scene of action till several hours after the trouble was all over—thinkin' the cop might have a right to shoot the steer for raisin' hell without a city license, you know. Anyhow, somethin' had to be done, and a happy thought struck me. That wall-eyed ox was standin' in the middle of 'eight' track and the right of way was clear from my end of the yards to the steer. So I tells one of the switchmen to let me in on 'eight' track and I would run down on the critter and put him out of business.

“I was sort o' anxious to see what the steer would do when he saw a steam engine prancin' down on him. I pulled the whistle string and when the Texan heard the toot, toot, and spied the engine comin', he just reared up on his hind feet and tore up the dirt like a steam shovel. The critter was certainly lookin' for as big game as he could see, and was im-

mensely delighted at the thought of a challenge from the iron hoss; so here he comes just a-flyin' and a-bellerin'. I loosened up the throttle a little bit till I was hittin' a pretty good lick, because the only thing to do in my estimation was to bust the brute's neck, so I went after him for blood.

"There was a head-end collision like them you read about. Talk about the cow jumpin' over the moon! You ought to have got a glimpse of the mid-air tour that Texas steer took. I heard that wiry old neck snap like a brittle saplin', and his carcass streaked out like it had wings; went plum over some box cars on the next track and lit on the cinders limp as a rag.

"But to give the devil his dues, I must say that raw-boned critter put up a good battle. He got in a sort of a side lick on the pilot of my engine that put the pony trucks clean off the rails, and after we had bounced over a few rail lengths of ties and tore up three or four rails, I managed to reach a standstill. I left the engine to the mercy of the yard gang and they had her back on the track in a little while.

"The switchmen wanted to give me three cheers and a tiger for the good riddance of bad rubbish. The steer was dead after about three or four hours of delay, but the yard work was soon on full blast again.

44 When the Texan was Yardmaster.

"I never did feel that I got my money's worth out of that deal, though. I'll admit it was a circus and was worth considerable, but it cost me just \$30 out of my next pay check. Why, you know the claim agent was around a day or two later and informed me the owner of that steer wanted the money for it, and said it was up to me to muster up my small change. I couldn't see it that way, but he changed my train of vision along that line, however. Told me I voluntarily ran down the steer; had me where I couldn't back out, so I signed up for the damages, and posted that thirty plunks on the losin' side of my account book to 'popular amusements.' "

THE DUMB LUCK OF "WIDE-OPEN JIM."

THE reason "Wide-open Jim" Hawkins was popular with the boys was not altogether because he was a seemingly reckless, happy-go-lucky chap. Jim's good nature was limited with a high degree of good sense and decency that gave him a prestige among his fellows. All odds to the contrary, Jim had a good head, and had gained his engineer's stripes very young; he was the youngest engineer on the division.

"Wide-open Jim's" career as an engineer, fortunately and unfortunately, was short. How the closing of it could have the paradoxical characteristics of a fortunate misfortune can better be imagined at the story's end. But during the time Jim ran an engine, when engineer on the Pollywog branch passenger run, he established a few records for speed that made all previous fast runs on the branch read like funeral processions in comparison.

For any railroad company, speed is a winner, as long as a limit to it and to the engi-

46 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

neer's record-smashing ambition drops brakes somewhere this side of a railroad wreck. And speed was "Wide-open Jim's" long suit. That's why he was dubbed "Wide-open." When he held down the cushion on the right side of a locomotive cab, the throttle was wide open as long as the steamer had enough breath to keep her drivers propelling. He was a hearty fellow and the bent of his happy-go-lucky nature seemed to be to play the "dumb-luck" proposition to the extreme. Always running his engine over the road at a rip-snorting pace, it was a mystery he didn't have more smash-ups than he did, or wasn't fired about once a month regularly. But still Jim's anatomy was all together and his record was fairly rid of demerit marks, in spite of his dare-devil propensities—as the railroad men called them. His good fortune was allotted to plain, everyday dumb luck.

Of course, Jim liked to brag on his wild, flying maneuvers. It's an old saying that "a fool laughs at his own folly"; Jim wasn't fool enough to go into hysterics over his hair-breadth escapes, but he sometimes liked to tell about them and make the other fellows laugh.

When Jim had been on the engine board long enough to get a pool, he took the Pollywog passenger run. It was one on which the engine men had to sit on fly-paper if they hoped to hold their seats. The dinky little

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 47

old No. 266 that handled the business end of the Pollywog run was an "old-timer"; one of the type of engines the men called "gallopers." The Pollywog was a branch road through a marshy country; the road-bed was soft, and on it the 266 overdid her galloping tendency. But "Wide-open Jim" was raised on the range up to the time he took a job in the round-house, and riding the 266 was ample reason to recall the range days when his main ambition was to be able to sit unruffled on a wild and woolly cayuse.

The pool mate of "Wide-open Jim," his fireman, was one "Windy" Walker, second to none as a "wind-jammer," hot-air manufacturer, etc., etc. "Windy" and Jim were two of a kind and if one could outstrip the other in exhibition of dare-devil skill or the telling about it afterwards, the other wouldn't admit it. "Windy" and Jim were a pair of extravagant yarn spinners. They could dress up the plain and simple truth until it looked like a bird of paradise; and they not only could, but usually did.

The exploits of "Wide-open Jim" were numerous. He had been in every kind of a "mix-up" from a box-car "jamboree" in the yards to a flight on a runaway engine, and "dumb luck," as a life preserver, had certainly played its part well. But, as some of the boys said, the moth is bound to get his wings singed

48 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

if he insists on monkeying over the lime light. And Jim reached the end of his rope one day.

It happened along in the early part of June. Jim had been on the Pollywog run over two years. The fact that he missed only four runs during the month of June, put all previous records on the Pollywog in the shade.

Every June the Pollywog looked more like a trans-Atlantic steamship route than a railroad track. The June rise was an annual contortion of the Big Turtle river, and contemporaneous with the June rise were the futile efforts of the railroad company to keep traffic open on the Pollywog branch. A greater part of its length the branch followed the course of the Big Turtle river, and if the river's annual rise went to flood tide, and it usually did, the Pollywog was out of business. That is until "Wide-open Jim" took the run. One way he broke the record, was taking the train safely across the South Lake swamp, even though the water did rush over the track. In years before Jim's day there was nothing doing on the Pollywog when she was buried in water. The engineers wouldn't risk their lives on it.

The year Jim made his last run on the Pollywog branch, the Big Turtle flood was higher than ever before. The old South Lake bottom, like most river valley swamps, was an old river bed, and when the Big Turtle got up

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 49

and in a hurry it cut across through the old river bed with sweeping force.

That day a freight train started out in an attempt to cross the swamp, but couldn't make it, and backed down to the station because the gurgling sweep of water across the right of way said "Danger" as plainly as a red flag could have signaled. A civil engineer went out later and said the track was still intact, but was under two and a half feet of water and there was no telling when the grade would give away. Jim said he didn't want any more space to run his engine on than the track, and he was willing to take out his passenger train on schedule time if the dispatcher would only say the word. The passenger train was made up and ready; but when the construction man reported the track was in danger of washing out, the dispatcher annulled the train. The annulling order, however, hadn't reached Engineer Jim Hawkins before something interfered. That something was a man with a wild, frenzied look in his eye; an elderly man, well dressed, refined appearing and apparently well-to-do. He had heard there was a possibility the branch passenger train would be annulled, and that news was reason for the worn, determined expression that overran his face as he rushed out of the depot and fairly ran the full length of the platform towards the engine. "Wide-open Jim" was seated on

50 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

the platform near his engine, calmly waiting the dispatcher's decision; his running orders already in his hand. The conductor was standing at his side.

The well-dressed stranger with a message of distress in his face rushed up.

"Gentlemen," he said, almost out of breath, "there is a possibility this train will be annulled, but I must get across that river to Kington to-night; I must do it. Who must I see, quick; who is running this train?"

He spoke imploringly, pitifully. At the close of his question his jaws clenched, his eyes twitched nervously as though he knew not which way to turn for help. Trouble was sculptured in his well-proportioned face. With a sudden nervous move he thrust a yellow strip of paper towards the men, crying:

"Men, just read that. Can't you help me? I'll give you anything you ask if it is in my power."

The yellow strip of paper was a telegram. The message was brief but held on its type a story, a sad, pathetic story. It read: "Doctor says hurry; Alice can't live long."

Who was Alice? Who was the stranger? What mattered it? Those strong men were impressed with the stranger's pleading. Their silent, inborn sympathies were his.

The conductor handed back the telegram.

"Well, friend, I feel sorry for you. You

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 51

know we are under orders. We may go out yet. But when it comes to crossing that flood, it's the engineer's danger, not mine," he said, complacently, with a look that suggested to Engineer Jim, he might go ahead, anyhow, just for the sake of the stranger, and Alice. The worried man also caught the suggestion. He implored Hawkins to make the run; he talked money, any amount Jim would ask. He mentioned the name of a faithful, beloved daughter, sick unto death, in her delirium calling the absent father. It was the conversation of only a moment, but Jim's heart was moved.

"Eh, George," the engineer called to the conductor who had walked a few paces towards the rear of the train, "go give 'em the high sign, and we'll see whether we can navigate that Pollywog or not," and told the stranger to climb aboard and he'd "Make a stagger at it."

"Wide-open Jim" started on his last trip over the Pollywog. As the train pulled around the curve, a dispatcher ran out of the depot on to the platform, looked for a minute blankly at the disappearing train, then tore his hair and clenched his fist in mid-air alternately, and swore. "That d—n fool, I just got word from across the river that the South Lake track has gone out." Upon calming down, he added: "Well, I'll bet it's 'good-bye' to old 'Wide-open Jim.'"

52 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

Three weeks later "Wide-open Jim" and his fireman "Windy" Walker still occupied cots side by side in the railroad hospital when a nurse ushered in a tall, elderly man and a frail, good-looking young woman. They asked to see the engineer who ran into the South Lake washout.

Jim recognized the man as his excited passenger of three weeks before, and in his eagerness to grasp the outstretched hand, he rose up, supported by his elbow to a part sitting posture, for a moment forgetful of his broken leg. Then the pain racked him and he fell back with a groan. His head on his pillow, he shook hands with the visitor, warmly. Jim's first words were an apology for his almost fatal failure to cross the South Lake flood. "But I couldn't help it. I did my best. The blamed track was washed out, you know," he added, regretfully, and after a pause, with audible emotion, Jim asked, "And did she, eh—did Alice die?"

Jim held his breath in doubtful expectation, but his hopes for the best were reassured by the color that flushed up into the somewhat pale cheeks of the tall, graceful young woman at the man's side. Her pale cheeks were too much of a contrast to her dark, wavy hair to be natural. The waning pallor of recent sickness was there. Her lips were still slightly compressed and the lines beneath her soft lu-

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 53

minous eyes told that fever had hollowed them. Jim saw it all in a moment, even before the elderly man had time to speak. He perceived she must be Alice.

"Ah, no," the visitor replied, in a deep guttural laugh, apparently pleased by the interest Jim manifested. "This is my Alice and she is almost well now. She will soon be herself again," as he caught her arm and urged her forward.

The look of surprise was on her face.

"Why, father, you didn't tell me any one was hurt. And was all this for me?" she turned her eyes towards Jim, questioningly.

The injured man studied those eyes a moment, attracted by their refined, appealing, clear expression. "Well, maybe it was; and I'm mighty glad it was for you, too, but I'm sorry I failed. You know the track was washed out and we couldn't make it," despondently; then brightened up, "But I'm powerfully glad to know you're better. Y' must have been pretty sick, eh?"

"Yes, I'm feeling strong again. This is the first day I have been out of the house, and papa brought me here on the first train to meet the bravest man he ever saw. I feel so sorry for you. Were you hurt very much?" she inquired, sympathetically.

"Naw," drawled Jim, "didn't amount to much. I got my right leg busted in two

54 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

places and will have to keep it in a plaster Paris boot for a while. But speakin' of bein' brave. I don't want you to overlook my fireman there. He deserves more credit than I do, because he got hurt worse."

Jim turned his head towards the cot next to him and continued: "O, 'Windy's' asleep all this time. Guess we'd better let him sleep, then. He got cut up pretty badly about the head, and one foot was mashed. The doctor says fever's set in, and it might go pretty hard with 'Windy.' "

"Poor fellow," said Alice, with much concern, and as she looked long at the bandaged head of the fireman, two big tears filled her eyes. Burying her face in her handkerchief, she was on the verge of giving way to tears at the thought that those injuries were suffered for her.

But Engineer Jim sidetracked the tears. He exhorted laughingly: "Here, here, Miss Alice, push back those tears. Le' me tell you somethin'. Why, there's half a hundred fellows in this hospital every week who get hurt for nothin' at all. 'Windy'—his name's Mr. Walker—and I are the luckiest fellows in the establishment since we found out we didn't get hurt for nothin'. We got hurt for your sake, and we're satisfied. So now, please don't cry. It's just a little vacation for us, y' know."

After a ten-minute conversation the nurse

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 55

who had ushered the visitors into the ward whispered something in Alice's ear about Mr. Hawkins not being very strong yet, so Alice and her father shook hands with the injured man, got his promise that when Walker became able, he would be told of the visit, and bade the engineer "Good-bye."

"And your name?" the elderly gentleman inquired, upon taking his leave, and handing Jim a card.

"O, my name is Jim Hawkins. 'Scuse me for not telling you what it was before."

"Well, Mr. Hawkins, keep that card, and if you ever want a friend in need, just call on me. I hope the company rewarded you for the brave attempt to get the train across the flood?" He asked as though he took it for granted it already had done so.

"Yes, you're right, the company rewarded me," Jim replied, demurely, and turned his head on his pillow with an air of dejection. But before he told about the "reward" Miss Alice interrupted, excitedly:

"O! what was it? A gold medal?"

"Gold medal? Yes, and then some." (Jim made a humorous attempt at converting his dejected spirits into a bland smile.) "They discharged me. Said if I had obeyed my orders in the first place, there would have been no wreck; and, in the second place, if I had crept along the flooded track cautiously, the wreck

56 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

wouldn't have been half so bad. But when they fished the engine up out of the mud hole and found her throttle wide open as though I was tryin' to hit a mile-a-minute lick through the water, that settled it. But, shucks! that was the only thing to do, to get the best of that current. But the throttle was wide open, so they fired me."

Nothing had been said about the money talk the stranger put up before Jim started with that ill-fated train. In fact, Jim had not given it further thought, from the fact that he was unsuccessful in the attempt. But a few days after the first visit of Alice and her father, when Jim and Walker were in condition to stand for a little surprise party, the nurse handed each of them an envelope containing a check for \$250, from William Tudor, the stranger.

The visits of Alice Tudor and her father to the railroad hospital were repeated. With a woman's sense of hospitality to the sick Alice saw to it that a fresh bouquet of flowers continually shed its cheery effect throughout the ward from the little stand between the cots of Walker and Hawkins.

With the passing of time, Alice more and more fully recuperated from her recent illness. The fever pallor disappeared, and like day brightens from early dawn to full sunlight, the glow of health crept into her cheeks.

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 57

The frail young woman who, with her father, came to the hospital one day in search of the engineer who ran into the South Lake wash-out, now carried a graceful feminine stalwartness far removed from frailty. But time was not so auspicious to the recovering engine crew. The knitting of the shattered bones was a slow process of nature. Days lengthened into weeks, and weeks were numbered months before the "plaster Paris boot," as Hawkins called it, was permanently removed from his leg, or the trepanned skull of the fireman was as sound as the original. During those hot, tedious days, what a soothing air of contentment invaded the ward with the presence of the occasional visitor! She seemed never forgetful of why or for whom those strong men suffered. Her congeniality and cheerfulness was to them a most pleasing expression of gratefulness.

The only pang of dissatisfaction in Walker's mind was that he couldn't do himself justice for appearance' sake. "Windy" was certainly a queer looking object. To enable the physicians to dress the wounds on his head the scalp had been shaved close, and offsetting the growth of bristly whiskers on his face, the jaunty bandages that encased his head and jaws, perpendicularly, put an odd dignity on undignified Walker. Yet, perhaps it was the very oddity of his makeup that brought what

58 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

Walker was prone to imagine, a partiality of smiles and sunshine in his direction from the fair visitor. Naturally a simple friendship sprung up, or rather continued to grow, between Miss Alice and the two men. But it was not until the young engineer insisted that a barber come and put the disappearance act to his whiskers, each morning they expected Alice and her father, that Walker began to grow suspicious. Maybe Engineer Jim peered through and beyond the pales of simple friendship.

* * * * *

"Wide-open Jim" did not seem to feel badly over the dethronement from engineer's seat on the Pollywog run. Even before he was able to leave the hospital Mr. Tudor had confided to him that all efforts to get him reinstated had been of no avail, so Mr. Tudor told Jim he had a job for him up on his ranch near Kington.

At Kington Mr. Tudor was known as "Cattleking" Tudor, because he owned several cattle ranches. As Jim Hawkins had been raised on the farm, the offer was reasonable indeed. The old man was more than pleased when Jim accepted the offer with a glad hand.

There is perhaps one more time an engineer has to depend on dumb luck than on the road. That is when the company informs him he is

Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim." 59

in need of another job. "Dumb luck," as the railroad boys termed it, always had been a special companion of "Wide-open Jim," and it seemed not to have deserted him after his name was dropped from the engineers' pool. It wasn't long until "Windy" Walker was telling among the boys about what a hit Jim had made with that rich old boy, "Cattleking" Tudor.

But "Windy" was interested further with the welfare of his former engineer. To himself he wondered how far that friendship between pretty Alice and Jim had gone. The possibilities were greatly in Jim's favor, Walker thought, for if Jim had proved-up on the elder Tudor's friendship, surely that was the most important advance of the campaign—if there was any campaign. But time wore on, and as no well-grounded rumor developed that that friendship had flourished, Walker took it for granted it had wilted away.

Fully a year had passed since "Windy" had heard from Jim, when one day he received a letter and recognized the handwriting as that of the well-remembered friend of the past, "Wide-open Jim." "Windy" reflected as he opened the envelope, "Mighty sporty stationery, seems to me," and after absorbing its surprising contents, with the news on his tongue's end he rushed over to Duke's shop to spread the information among the crowd that always

60 Dumb Luck of "Wide-Open Jim."

had attentive ears when "Windy" was spokesman. But "Windy" wasn't very talkative right then. He preferred showing them the original. After an abbreviated explanation he simply passed the little square card around, and each man read with undisguised interest:

"Mr. and Mrs. William Tudor announce the marriage of their daughter, Alice, to"—and when each got that far he just punctured the air with an exclamation.

The card went the rounds. After Engineer Larkin, who was an old pool mate of "Wide-open Jim" Hawkins, took his turn at reading the announcement, he smiled a smile of satisfaction, and handing the card back to Walker, said dryly: "Well, old Lucky Jim Hawkins. S'pose now he's mixed up with the plutocrats, it ain't 'Wide-open Jim' no longer. Well, that's some more of *Mr.* Jim's dumb luck!"

"Yes," responded Walker, as he fumbled over the card in making it fit in the envelope, "I reckon it might be dumb luck as far as Jim's concerned—it's leap year."

THE FATE OF THE 368.

A "WINDY" WALKER STORY.

THE discussion had drifted into a scientific channel. The audience at Duke's shop was certainly a comical crowd to launch out on a perusal of scientific subjects; by analogy, a good deal like a bull-frog discoursing on classic music. The student brakemen had recently visited the air-brake instruction car, that had stopped over for a few days to show the railroad men a few turns in operating Westinghouse air brakes, and had gotten their heads full. But the gang didn't stop at discussing air brakes. It went on a wild, reckless invasion of the liquid-air field and its late discoveries.

Duke's shop was an interesting shack. Duke was the railroad men's shoemaker, a cripple who wheeled about in a home-made go-cart because his legs were paralyzed and hung limp and useless. But, cripple though he was, Duke was apparently a most happy man. His loud, cheery, "Hi, there! old timer!" rang out in

greeting the railroad men of the two divisions as they went on trains or afoot, to and fro, past his shop; and the responding, "Hello, Duke! Howdy all come on?" was always spirited with much good will. The shop was only a few feet from the right of way. All day long, past it, the ponderous, lumbering locomotives and laden freight trains, the panting switch engines and the lithe, speeding passenger trains, fled with an intensely interesting, bustling air of excitement. The shop itself was a most unpretentious affair, about ten feet in each of its three dimensions. The front was the regulation, square, sign-board front, decorated along the upper part with dim, rambling letters, "DUKE'S SHOP." Dim because time and weather had worn them away, and why shouldn't they have done so? The letters disclosed information to no one; everybody knew it was Duke's shop.

There always was a gang at Duke's shack. Inside, the low wooden bench that extended along the west wall, the visitors' bench, was never vacant. A cordial welcome beamed forth from the big, red, round face of Duke, and was voiced by his chesty, hearty voice. Through the open door and the murky window panes filtered a cheerful air of contentment, while the ceiling's stucco work of cobwebs and the dingy board walls that were most untastefully riddled with various and sundry ad-

vertising pictures, opera house posters, etc., seemed to animate the interior with an unpretending good humor that drove dull care away.

But, after all, perhaps the principal attraction at Duke's place was the gang itself. It was never twice the same gang. It claimed no qualifications, secrets or party lines. Engineers, firemen, conductors, brakemen, switchmen, insurance agents, shop men, office men, came and went, and mingled there in common. None of them ever walked past Duke's shop with a minute or two to spare without poking his head in the doorway to learn what the gang, lined up on the visitors' bench, was discussing. Occasionally it was politics; very seldom the bench was the scene of a scientific research; but more often, in fact, nearly always, the gang was listening to the hair-raising experiences of some loquacious brakeman or fireman. Duke's shop was the story-teller's Mecca, and as the truth was bounded neither on the north or south, east or west, a great deal of graphic originality crept into narration.

On the morning in question the gang at Duke's was on an unprecedented tour in the scientific world. The boys had exhausted their knowledge of Westinghouse air brakes, and the carload of information in the instruction car. One of the brakeys had read an article on liquid air and its wonders to per-

form. The subject was generally discussed. The brakeman advanced the theory that rail-roading would be revolutionized by running steam engines with liquid air, and that firemen would no longer "be a necessary evil"; they wouldn't be needed.

"Windy" Walker, fireman, held down a section of the bench that morning. "Windy" was always "there with the goods" when it came to story telling, but the scientific review didn't seem to interest him. He had been silent most of the time the heavy discussion was in order. Silence wasn't one of "Windy's" personal characteristics, either. He had held in about as long as he could, when he volunteered to carry the scientific stage of the conversation into a little personal experience matter he had on his mind.

"Liquid air?" "Windy" interrupted. "Huh! that's nothing new. They used to run engines with that stuff long time ago. Had a little 'sperience along that line myself."

"O, no! I guess your 'speriences are all of the hot-air sort; that's what you're givin' us right now," retorted the brakey who had volunteered a flyer in the liquid-air discussion.

Walker, as well as the rest of the crowd, recognized that it was more liable to be a piece of hot-air strategy than one of the liquid-air sort, and Walker laughed with the rest; but he didn't back down.

"Naw, sir; liquid air, the genuine article. It was when old 'Wide-open Jim' Hawkins and I were on the Pollywog passenger run. Well, you remember when that little runt of a 368 ran away and flew into flinders, just as if she had a firebox full of dynamite bombs. O, that was about three years ago. Well, that was liquid air that did that," and Walker put on such a serious, matter-of-fact look, as if challenging dispute, that the other fellows just laughed and left the way clear for Walker.

Duke ceased plying his hammer a moment, looked up from his bench, across the rampart of old shoes that surrounded him, and said, encouragingly, "The white light's out, 'Windy'; you've got your orders. Steam up."

A smile of satisfaction beamed over Walker's face, and he continued: "You know where the Pollywog leaves the Big Turtle valley up there at that clump of cottonwood trees on the hill—the town's name is Cottonwood Point, a dinky little, old, God-forsaken lookin' place. Well, one day when 'Wide-open Jim' and I reached the Point, on out run, we found that neither of the ejectors were workin', and, by jimminy! we come to find out, there wasn't hardly a drap of water in the tank. We knew right off we were in it good and plenty, because no one ever heard of any water being up there on that sunburned desert, 'specially in the swelterin' month of August. It was

August then, as I remember. The little old town has about a hundred dried-up, antiquated inhabitants, who always have lived there and always will. It was up to us to rustle some water, enough to cover the crown sheet, or dump our fire, so I went to the station agent and asked him if there was any show for a feller gettin' a barrel or two of water at the Point.

"He says: 'Water? Why, we ain't see'd any water up here since last June, 'ceptin' when we'd go to th' Big Turtle on a picnic, or somethin' like that, and bring back a little, just as a sort o' curiosity. Ef it's a drink ye want, I should think a leetle less than a barrel full'd do ye,' and he got right confidential, as though mebbby there might be a United States revenue collector, or a Prohibitionist, around, and whispered, 'Ye kin git a pretty good brand of ole Kentucky rye down there at Swaller's drug store. Ye wanter ask him fer a pint of snake cure, cross yer breast like this, wink twice with each eye, draw yer hand acrost yer forehead, this-a-way, and then he'll give ye it all right. Them's the secret signs, ye know. He's got to be kind o' sus-specious of strangers; but this is a "wet" town; y' kin bet it is. Constable Schutsenschumer'—or some jaw-breakin' Dutch name he tried to get off—'don't care if Swaller sells it; come down to

bare facts, the constable likes it himself pretty much.'

"I stopped the jibberin' idiot, and finally got it through his puddin' head what we wanted the water for. He looked mighty serious.

" 'Nary a drap up here that I know of,' he said. 'Yet they call it a "wet" town for a Prohibition State.'

"Well, I started back to tell my hog-head what crooked straits we was in, and got outside the shanty door, when an idea struck the agent. It struck him so hard he hollered, and I went back to see what he knew.

" 'I hav' an idear,' says 'e.

" 'Have ye,' I said, doubtin' like. 'I'm from Missouri; you've got t' show me.'

" 'Why,' says 'e, 'b'lieve I can help ye get yer train out of th' city. I know where y' kin git some steam.'

"Well, he had me goin' south, an' I asked him how in thunder he was goin' t' get steam without water. He directed me to Professor Nomuch, who lived up on the top side of the burg; said he was an inventor—made steam out of air with some kind of a horse-power riggin'.

"Well, I headed over and asked 'Wide-open Jim' if he was willin' to do a little 'speriment-in' to get them passengers over to Fountain, the end of the branch. 'Course Jim was longin' to buck up against any kind of a proposition

for the good of the company, and told me to tote along my steam manufacturer. So I hiked off up to that would-be professor's lean-to, sweat rollin' off me as though I was a wet sponge, and some one stepped on me. When I reached the old boy's shanty he was out catchin' doodle bugs with a fisherman's landin' net. He was a powerfully polite, stuck-up specimen; introduced himself to me as Professah Johnathan Isaac Newton Nomuch, a Ph.D., D.D., A. B. C., X. Y. Z., promulgator of modern science, investigator, promoter and manufacturer of perpetual motion machines, liquidized atmosphere specialist, and a whole scad of handles on to his name, blamed if I knew what they all meant. But I made him quit talkin' his tomfoolery, and got down to business. Then I first learned about his liquid air. He said he had tried it on steam engines, and a few drops would run an engine an hour. That suited me finer 'an silk, and I told him to go ahead with his rat killin'. He put me wise on some of the other 'speriments he had made with it. Said he put a drop in the ear of the laziest man in Cottonwood Point,—and I'll bank on it that meant the laziest man in the whole State of Kansas—when he was asleep. The lazy hummer never had been known to work, but he jumped up and put in forty acres of corn and forty in potatoes in one day, and has been workin' like a beaver ever since. That

made me skeered of the blame stuff, and I told him to be sure and not let any of that magical wetness get in my ears.

"The old boy had a lot of apparatus rigged up in his barn loft. He went up on the roof and began swingin' a scoop shovel as though he was firin' a ten-wheeler. I couldn't see anything doin'. I thought the duffer must be crazy. He said that was his liquid air machine, and he was fillin' the air vats with fresh air. Well, that was about the limit, I thought. Then he got down, mixed up a conglomeration out of half a dozen bottles he called his laboratory, poured the mixture in the air vat, screwed the top down on it, and said he would apply his 1,000-horse power plant to get some pressure, and it would turn into liquid. He got out a bony old nag, hitched to a merry-go-round lookin' paraphernalia outside and started round. I hollered and asked him where the other 999 horses were, and he slowed down and informed me: 'This animal is no ordinary hoss, please, sir. This is a 1,000-hoss power hoss, please, sir.'

"That pelican-necked, shaggy-headed, bean-eyed professah was a mystery to me. I asked him how he made out that was a thousand-horse power hoss, and he said it was because he had dropped a little liquid air in the quadruped's ear.

"He had made about a dozen rounds with

his 'hoss-power machine, when I noticed the liquid began droppin' off a spigot into a bucket. I was afraid to get near the output for fear some of it might splash on me, and I would suddenly get stout and take a notion to go back, hook myself up to that train, and pull it over the hills to Fountain. The old man drew off a quart of the liquid air into a bottle, and we jogged off back to the train. The passengers were getting terribly impatient, and were suffering with the heat. Mr. Nomuch, in a very mysterious way he had, tickled me by tellin' us to put out the fire, as it wasn't needed at all, so I dumped the grates and quit shovelin' coal for the rest of the trip.

"He made us oil up all the engine's bearings, and when we said to get busy with his steam maker, he put a few drops of that fontonious liquid into the exhaust valves, escape valves, dropped some in the safety valve, and said he thought it would seep through. Jim and I were in the cab. I had my feet up against the boiler head as proud as a millionaire to think that I didn't have to shovel any more coal, when all of a sudden the little craft began to tremble. The Nomuch freak yelled to look out, she had commenced steamin', so just to test her Jim opened the throttle to the last notch. She didn't get any forward motion for a few seconds, and then with an exhaust that sounded like a torpedo, the old 368 jumped

plum out of her boots, came down on the track all right, and just fairly flew. She started off so suddenly the conductor didn't get time to say 'All aboard,' and some of the passengers were left to the mercy of the hills at Cottonwood Point station.

"I never seen 'Wide-open Jim' look like he was scared but just that once, and he did get pale around the gills, it was such a sudden surprise party on him. The bloomin' throttle was wide open, and Jim couldn't shut 'er. When I volunteered to help him I guess he sort o' realized he was a little shaky, so he braced up and brave-like said to let her go Gallagher a while. The way the puny little 368 romped over those hills and back down into the Big Turtle valley, made them passengers think they were travelin' on the tail end of a streak of lightnin'. A mile a minute was a slow schedule 'side of the rate that skit-tish 'Old Nancy' promenaded.

"By the time we had traveled about twenty or thirty miles, Jim and me seen we couldn't stop 'er. I came down off my perch and tried to help him shut that throttle, but we couldn't equalize the pressure. The throttle didn't budge. We hung on to it till the blame lever snapped. With the throttle busted we certainly thought our checks were due at the undertaker's counter. We began doin' some tall figurin' on how to get out of the muss. I

started to jump, but Jim glued on to me, and tol' me I'd better shoot myself than to jump. Then Jim got his presence of mind battery in operation and started back over the pile of coal in the tender, tellin' me to follow suit. We got back to the blind baggage, and Jim says 'we will just desert her, cut her loose from the train, and save the passengers anyhow.' So we uncoupled her, and as that little galloper and the coaches parted company, she just snorted, went off with a whoop, and loped down the line.

"But Jim and me got the train to Fountain all right by just gaugin' the speed with the handbrake on the mail coach, because it was down grade part of the way. We landed in front of the depot, square dab in the right place by twistin' the brake just right. Conductor and passengers even didn't know the little old 368 had gotten out of our class for speed and left us.

"Well, on that one run Jim and me decided we got our fill of liquid air. If anybody would offer us any more we probably would decline with a brickbat. The company never did find out we were 'sperimentin' when the 368 went to smash. That little old engine simply went the limit; danced her fill and then paid the fiddler. She rammed right down into the Fountain yards faster'n hell's automobile, threatenin' to scatter an epidemic of wrecked

box cars through the yards, when she overtaxed her ability to hang together. She just went to pieces like an infernal machine; ripped out a great big holler, and she was all in splinters. There didn't enough of her scrap iron light in any one place to make a wheelbarrow load. They tell me it rained pulverized scrap iron all over that part of the country for an hour. About that time the No. 368 was crossed off the company's books as deceased, but she died hard.

"Tell ye now, when it comes right down to talkin' scientifics, it's my candid opinion that liquid air is a mighty dangerous hobby, 'nd that it is too fractious an ingredient to mix with a locomotive, 'nd that it never will be used to revolutionize railroadin'. Them's my sentiments."

THE GOLDEN RULE TRAINMASTER.

COLD, bleak and drizzly was the night when Trainmaster Ed was killed in the west end of the yards by an extra freight. The night itself was enough to give a yard man the blues, but aside from the dismal weather, it was a night of sorrow. There were two accidents in the yards that night.

In the afternoon there had been a little "shake-up" of the night yard force before Trainmaster Ed Stoddard. It was over a little unpleasantness between the night yardmaster and night switch foreman of the west end crew. The investigation showed up the switchman in a bad light, and he was modestly reprimanded by the official.

The yardmaster's story was that he had ordered the foreman to make up and send out "Second 38" ahead of a "red ball" freight, east bound, and the foreman refused to comply with the order. It was more convenient for the switch foreman to make up the red ball stuff first and get it out of the way, as that train was nearly ready when the "Second 38"

The Golden Rule Trainmaster. 75

pulled into the yards. But considering the fact that the second section of No. 38 was partly made up of ten carloads of cattle which had been on their feet fifteen hours, the train with the livestock should have received the first consideration, as the yardmaster ordered.

Switch Foreman Golden put in no defense. He was in bad humor, and, in fact, let his ill feelings overcome his common sense. Golden said a good many things to Trainmaster Ed he wouldn't have dared to pour on to any other official. But he knew Trainmaster Stoddard's custom was to bridle his tongue and not fight back at his men, so he took advantage of Stoddard's good nature. The trainmaster was painfully aware of the fact.

"Well, Golden," calmly spoke the official, after the switch foreman had ceased his harangue, "I thought you were a man with better sense than to talk like that. I don't believe in it myself, and of course I can't permit the men to use that kind of language to me. I didn't intend to mar your standing any on this little trouble," and he hesitated a minute, "but your actions make it necessary for me to give you ten demerit marks. Now I want this matter dropped, and do not want to hear of any more trouble between you and the yardmaster. We have to work with unity, or the yards can't be kept clear. I think I will be down to-night to see how things are moving."

76 The Golden Rule Trainmaster.

Golden looked at him with dogged surprise. A most strange thing for an official to do was to tell ahead of time when he would drop down to see how the men are working. The switchman didn't take it in the right light. He considered it an insinuation that the trainmaster thought he couldn't tend to his own business without being watched and made to. Golden did not reply, but as he opened the door to leave, he grumbled to himself: "Hope to hell if you do y'll get run over."

Golden didn't mean what he said, any more than he intended that the trainmaster should hear it. But his anger excited him to speak louder than really was his intention. The trainmaster heard the switchman's sullen wish and looked up in mute surprise. Golden slammed the door and left the building in bitter resentment of his own as well as the trainmaster's action.

Trainmaster Stoddard left his office an hour or two later, the day's work finished, with a heavy heart. It always had been his custom to treat his men kindly. When they were before him for mistakes they had or had not made, he talked to them more as a friend than a hard-hearted, official demagogue, as most officials were wont to do. Other officials who knew of and were envious of Stoddard's popularity with the men, complained of him being "too easy." There is an unwritten, but much

The Golden Rule Trainmaster. 77

practiced, law with some officials that there must be an ostentatious lot of browbeating on the part of the "brass collars," or railroad men can't and won't do their duty. But Stoddard did not believe in it. He was one of the few who had successfully used what some had termed, with an attempt at sarcasm, the "moral suasion" method. He had worked up to his official position from brakeman, and "knew the ropes." He had had experiences with loud-mouthed officials. For his part, Stoddard treated the men as fellow-men, in the real sense of the word. Along the line he was known as "The Golden Rule Trainmaster."

Yet at times he grew discouraged. Occasionally his resigned, friendly disposition was grounds for his men to overstep the limits of propriety in their dealings with him; sometimes they took advantage of his good nature, as Golden had done. It pained him to have trouble with his men, and the bout with the switch foreman that afternoon left a weight on his heart. He sometimes questioned himself if, after all, it paid to be kind to his men.

Unfortunately for him, Trainmaster Ed kept his word and went to the yards that night to look around. It was not an unusual thing for him to do. He walked down towards the west end, and was surprised to see things in such bad shape. The customary rattle and bang of switch engines and box cars was not

78 The Golden Rule Trainmaster.

audible. The stillness that prevailed carried with it a sense of mysteriousness. Over at the round-house, two hundred yards away, the clang! clang! of an engine bell broke the distant monotony of the night, and an exploded safety valve roared away morosely. 'Way back in the east end an incoming freight train rumbled as though it were thunder, threatening to increase the drizzling rain. But why the silence in the yards? Long rows of box cars, dimly silhouetted against the dark sky, melting away into darkness east and west, stood motionless. The glare of an engine headlight, on the second main track far down in the west end, made the long stretches of damp rails look like streaks of silver, and here and there, along the tracks, the smooth, wet surface of a tie, glistened white. Trainmaster Ed, with hands thrust deep in his overcoat pockets, walked towards the dazzling array of headlights and switch lights in the west end of the yards.

As he neared the fiery headlight of the locomotive standing on the second main, he noticed a crowd of men around it, bobbing to and fro, apparently trying to replace the engine on the track with crowbars and jacks. But upon reaching the scene, that peculiar, intuitive perception which sometimes possesses a man, and causes him to ask, "Who's hurt?" held sway over Stoddard. For a moment he stood spell-

The Golden Rule Trainmaster. 79

bound. They told him Switchman Golden had been run down and was lying beneath the tender. No, not fatally injured—only lost one foot beneath the wheels. The engine had backed down on him from the east, and he didn't see the danger because there was no headlight on the rear end of the tender, as all switch engines should have. But one truck—two wheels—had passed over Golden's leg when the engine was stopped. The crushed leg was entangled between the wheel and the brake beam, and to release it without further danger and pain to the injured man, the two yard switch crews were raising the rear end of the tender on jacks, thus placing the wheel free of the rail, so it could be rotated by hand until the crushed limb was released. Stretched out beneath the engine tender, Golden directed the work, between groans. The trainmaster immediately took an active hand in the operations. Notch by notch the massive iron car was raised. The trainmaster removed his light overcoat, folded it several times, and, crawling under the edge of the car, placed it under Golden's head for a pillow, in a pool of water that had gathered in a slight depression of the ground.

It was then Golden recognized his trainmaster, with not a little surprise. "Why, that you, Ed?" And settled his head with a restful sigh on the improvised pillow. "Gee, that's

80 The Golden Rule Trainmaster.

awful good of you, Ed, and I don't deserve it, either," he added, recalling the scene in the trainmaster's office that afternoon. "I meant to get those trains all out in double quick time to-night, just to please you, Ed, but I guess," he hesitated uncertainly, "I guess I've made up my last train." And he laughed sickishly.

"Don't worry, Golden; it will be all right. Don't worry about trains. You're standing it bully, old boy. Just keep up your nerve and we'll have you out in a few minutes."

The trainmaster had no more than crawled out from under the engine tender than the distant whistle of a locomotive sounded in the west. Ed started, and with fumbling haste drew his watch from his pocket. "Nine fifteen," he said to himself, and with a sudden move turned, grabbed up a switchman's lantern, and ran west down the track, calling, as he started, "There comes No. 10."

With all the systematic insight drilled into an able railroad man, Trainmaster Stoddard in a second perceived that the approaching train was the fast passenger, No. 10, and that it traveled on the second main track, the same track on which the switch engine was standing. Had Switchman Golden been able to direct his engine he would have been on the lookout for No. 10, and the way would have been clear. But in his agony all this had escaped him.

The passenger train always whistled at a

The Golden Rule Trainmaster. 81

crossing half a mile west of the yard end. That meant it had about three-quarters of a mile to travel before, unless interrupted, it would crash into the rear end of the switch engine and grind poor Golden's body into the dust. The passenger train covered that first half mile, to the yard end, in less than a minute. That same minute the trainmaster, wildly swinging his lantern, rushed on down the track until the oncoming train, bearing down on him with the wings of the wind, was within a few feet of him. Still swinging his lantern, he jumped to the next track to the right of the second main track—to the right, because the engineer's is the right side of the cab. The engineer caught the signal, and the speeding passenger train was stopped barely in time to prevent a collision with the switch engine.

But in his frantic efforts to stop the dangerous approach of the passenger train, the trainmaster did not think to see whether or not any trains were approaching on the track to which he last stepped. He knew better? Of course he did. It was probably the first time he had ever been so careless, but with mind bent on saving the injured switchman's life, he neglected being cautious of his own safety. In moving from the second main track to avoid the speeding passenger train, he stepped in front of a westbound extra freight which was

82 The Golden Rule Trainmaster.

pulling out of the yards. In one fatal moment he was struck down and crushed beneath the wheels of the engine.

Trainmaster Ed died half an hour after the accident. Upon regaining consciousness a few minutes after he was run down, his first question was, "Did they get Golden out all right?"

The information that he had saved the switchman's life, put a satisfied smile on his lips. He closed his eyes and whispered, "Then it wasn't altogether in vain, after all."

The two men were laid side by side in the depot baggage room. When they brought Trainmaster Ed in on a car door for a stretcher and placed him beside the wounded switchman it was pitiful to hear Golden, as he learned how and why it all happened. Those men, who had parted a few hours before so unpleasantly in the trainmaster's office, now met like brothers. Golden, almost sobbing, begged forgiveness. Stoddard told him he had forgiven him before he left the trainmaster's office. He had changed his mind and did not place the ten demerit marks to the switchman's credit.

After all, most railroad accidents are alike to a great degree. A man is beneath the cruel wheels; the news spreads like a flash, and somewhere at the little home that is waiting for his return the messenger of death knocks, and with a gulp in his throat tries to tell that some one

The Golden Rule Trainmaster. 83

is hurt, and—well, no more information is necessary. Some one inside cries: "Yes, I knew it would come some time! I knew it would."

The crowd, mostly curious onlookers, about the injured man, seems conscious of some one's approach, and begins to break away; reverently it withdraws, and a woman, perhaps a sister, a mother, a wife, a daughter, hastens to his side, and on her knees catches the feeble voice: "Don't cry! Don't cry! It's all right—it's all right."

And such was the death of Trainmaster Ed, and how bravely he died. The battlefield has its recognized heroes, and why not every day life? To die like Ed Stoddard died is deserving of a hero's epitaph. He died forgiving those who had wronged him; he died in vain endeavoring to appease the sorrow of those who loved him.

A few days later, the afternoon set for the funeral, there was a scarcity of men on duty in every department of the railroad at that division point. The men did their last homage to one they respected and loved. The auditorium of the little church was filled, the anterooms and vestibules were crowded, and outside, about the door, stood a group of stalwart men with heavy hearts.

The pulpit rostrum was a bank of flowers, their perfume and loveliness mutely telling a

84 The Golden Rule Trainmaster.

story of love. And as it was whispered through the audience that the large anchor of white roses, supported upright on top of the coffin, was sent by Switchman Golden, no one wondered how he could afford such an elaborate tribute.

Railroad men as a class are not inclined to make a superficial show of respect for dead officials. If they respected him when he lived they will say so when he is dead; if he was not respected when living, there will be no overdue display of sorrow at his funeral on their part. And after Ed Stoddard's death, when his men said: "I never heard him swear at his men," "I never saw him in an angry mood," "I never heard any one, even men discharged by him, say a mean word about him," it signified that the "Golden Rule Trainmaster" was properly so called because he lived up to it.

Perhaps Trainmaster Ed sometimes had occasion to question himself, "Does it pay?" But it is plain there is only an affirmative answer. Those who studied his methods or took his life for an example say so. Other officials pass and are forgotten by the men under them almost before their places are filled. But Trainmaster Ed still lives in the hearts of his men because he treated them as fellow-men, and "did as he would be done by."

THE LAP-ORDER AT KENTON.

AN OPERATOR'S STORY.

"I NEVER put much belief in ghosts," said the big, fat, good-natured dispatcher, as he closed the telegraph key at the close of the day's work, picked up his partly smoked cigar and leaned his chair back against the wall with a comfortable air of congeniality, "until Jerry Conner came down from the postal office uptown and took a job on the half-and-half trick under me. I was head operator on the night shift here then. After I watched that fellow work for about a week, I laid awake off hours tryin' to get up arguments that there were no such things as ghosts, and if there were, they couldn't work a half-and-half trick pounding brass in a telegraph office. I tried to convince myself that way for Conner's sake, for if I ever saw a ghost running at large, it was Conner. Actually, he was the nearest item to a living skeleton I ever saw. And as for the ghost, not so much because he was so slim—he was transparent, but those eyes! Uh, they

haunt me yet. Connor had great, big, care-worn eyes, no color in particular, sort o' steel color, I guess, and they tapered to the inside corners with great, deep wrinkles, that met above the bridge of the nose in a terribly worried expression. A look at Conner would've made you think over all the troubles you'd had for the last ten years. Then he had a straight-haired, droopy mustache, forming almost a circle about his mouth, that only added misery to the aspect. To make a long story short, that fellow looked like he had cheated some undertaker out of the burial service by kicking the lid off the coffin and escaping.

"But when it comes to dealing in personalities, you can include me, too. I tip the beam at 220 pounds, and as for Conner, I figured it that if operators were retailing at five dollars a hundredweight, Conner would bring about two dollars and a half, net. He and I were such extremes that the fellows used to josh us and wonder why we didn't get diplomatic and strike a physical compromise. And I certainly would liked to have done so for Conner's sake, because that poor duffer just got thinner and thinner every day. The fellows tried to tell him he'd get fat if he would lay aside that corncob pipe long enough to let the nicotine seep out of his system, but that didn't count. He'd say their arguments were puny, and just point at me. 'Then why don't

that duffer get skinny?' he'd ask, and the boys couldn't say a word, because I'll admit I was pullin' on a cigar stub most of the time. The wise boys couldn't put up any more arguments on that proposition, and just to show them they couldn't pull any no-tobac wool over his eyes, Conner would reload his old weed-burner with a fresh load of long cut, smile sickish-like, and say: 'Why, I wouldn't last five minutes without my smokin's. It's nerve energy.'

But some of the boys decided they would test it. They put heads together, and one morning a neatly painted sign appeared on the wall of the operators' quarters, 'NO SMOKING ALLOWED WHEN ON DUTY.' It was all a put-up job, of course. The boys had hung the sign up there. They had put me 'next,' beforehand, and I told them, just to work the game on Conner, I would pass up the cigar-consuming business while at work for a month at least. I could quit, and wouldn't miss my Havanas very much.

"Well, you ought to have seen the expression on Conner's ghostly countenance when he saw that sign. The fellows who put the sign up there of course exhibited a great splurge of counterfeit surprise upon having their attention called to it, and one of them told Conner the general superintendent had ordered like signs to be displayed in all the operators' offices. That sign just cooked old Conner's

goose. The fellows tried to console him by saying it would be a good thing for him to quit spoiling so much tobacco, but really the thought of it seemed to make him feel worse.

"After that Conner didn't smoke on duty—that is, for a long time—and he just pined away as though he had lost his last friend. He smoked like a blast furnace off duty, but that indulgence didn't substitute, when he was on duty, for his 'nerve energy.'

"Conner was one of the best operators that ever rapped off the Morse code. He could chase it off fast enough to make the fellow's head swim at the other end of the line. But after he had to cut out the tobacco habit, Conner sort o' lost confidence in himself. As a kind of stimulant, he took on the strenuous habit of reading in the daily papers all he could find about railroad wrecks, especially where thickheaded operators and dispatchers were to blame. Every noon when Conner came to work—he went on duty at noon—he would have a pocket full of dailies, and hail us fellows with a 'Say, boys, did you see about that head-end mankiller they had over on the Wabash yesterday?' or, 'Did you read the account of that lap-order that put a passenger train in the ditch?' or, 'About the operator who committed suicide when he discovered he had forgotten to deliver an order and killed half a hundred passengers?' or, 'About the tower

man who let the mail train through the block when he should have had the red light out?' Every day Conner had a new one, until the fellows who always made it a point not to bother about other operators' griefs and misfortunes, said they couldn't stand for it, and got the vigilance committee to make old Conner pass around the papers to those who wanted to read the 'yellow' stuff about the man killers, and to quit harping about the wrecks.

"Well, the anti-tobacco scheme didn't help Conner. He got so thin his cheeks looked as hollow as scoop shovels, and his hands were bony and lank. Occasionally Conner would put his head in one hand, weary-like, while he rattled off the messages. He always had been a clear-headed fellow, but now he complained of feeling groggy. I always thought what really was the matter with Conner was that he doped his head so full of accounts of railroad wrecks that the constant fear that he might rush off a lap-order, or fall asleep at his trick, completely unnerved him. Things got worse. One night about ten o'clock, after eight hours' work, he said he was so nervous he had to quit, and left his trick after balling up a train order.

"Conner came to work as usual next day, and that evening I told him if he wasn't feeling well he'd better lay off. He then con-

fided to me if he could only smoke he would be all right, and I wish now I'd told him to go ahead and smoke if he wanted to, but I promised the jokers who put up the 'superintendent's' sign that I would stay by the deal for a month, and the four weeks weren't quite up yet, so I tried to jolly him, and told him how easy it was for me to cut out the nicotine when on duty. But Conner took it real serious. His big, hollow eyes yawned piteously, and his lower jaw dropped with an expression of despondency. That night I watched Conner a little closer than usual. Once, when there was nothing doing on his wires, I noticed that he dropped off into a little doze, but I just let him snooze, and listened for any calls on his wires. And when a call did sound, by sort of inborn instinct, I guess, Conner jumped awake with a start just as I was going to punch him in the ribs, and took the message all right. It was going on midnight when again I noticed that Conner was asleep with his head in his hands. I listened for any call over his wires, and was pretty sure there was none, but all of a sudden Conner sprang to his feet with a twitching, stary look in his eyes, as though he had been aroused suddenly from sleep. He held one hand to his head, the other extended in front of him as though he were listening to something. He stood that way for a mo-

ment. Then I said, 'Why, what's the matter, old boy? Have a bad dream?'

"I hadn't finished my question, when he let out an unearthly yell, and cried in a wailing sort of a voice: 'A lap-order, a lap-order at Kenton! O Lord! I knew I would do it! I knew I would do it!' and he sort o' reeled out of the room, grabbing his hat as he went. After he had slammed the door and started down the hall I could hear the poor duffer sobbing as though his heart was broken.

"I immediately jumped to his key and answered, 'What's that?' There was no answer. 'Is this Kenton?' I rattled off. Still no answer. Then I called, 'KT, KT, KT.' That was Kenton's call, but there was no reply. I waited only a moment, and then told the other fellows to take care of things, as I was going to follow Conner.

"The other operators were as excited as I was, and were standing about the key. One of them turned away and sniffed, 'That poor devil's crazy.' That was just what I thought; that was why I wanted to follow him. It was a dismally cold night, late in December, I believe. Snow had been falling all night, and the ground was covered about four inches deep. I jumped into my overcoat and hat as I chased out into the hall, and noticed as I left the room that Conner didn't take his overcoat. I hiked down the hall, down to the foot

92 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

of the stairs and called, 'O! Conner!' The night was dismally still—no wind, and snow flakes filling the air. Just enough moonlight shone through the hazy snow clouds to give the appearance of early dawn. I looked out the door and called again, but no one answered.

"The night ticket agent was just closing up business after the 11.30 o'clock train pulled out. I asked him if he had seen Conner. He got mighty interested, and said, 'Why, yes—or no. But what in the dickens was all that racket up-stairs just a minute ago. I heard some one stumblin' down stairs, and he sounded like he either had the agony of the gizzard or was doing some tall laughin', one of the two. What was the matter?'

" 'Well, you idiot, did you see him? Which way did he go?' I was very much excited, I'll admit, and the ticket agent was so muddled over the way I went at him that he couldn't gather his wits.

" 'Why, yes, I saw him. I mean, I saw some one, but who was it, I asked you?' he stammered.

"I was out of temper. I knew the agent was out of work until the morning trains, so I took his hat and overcoat off the nearby hook, socked his lid down on his head, grabbed him by the arm, and said to 'Come on. We have to find that fellow.' He drew back long

enough to see that everything was locked up all right, then he came along willingly, locked the office door, and we started.

"Lawton—that was the agent's name—told me that when he heard the racket he went to the waiting room door and saw a fellow with his hat in his hand and without an overcoat, run through the doorway at the foot of the stairs that led down from the telegraph quarters. I told him who it was, and what was the trouble, and was wondering how we could find him, when Lawton grabbed me by the arm and said to come on, that would be easy. We could follow his tracks in the snow if we started soon enough. Lawton had a good head on him. Funny, but I never thought of the tracks.

"Sure enough, from the stair door, the footprints of a man broke the smooth surface of the snow out across the depot platform. It was plain from the distance between the tracks that Conner was running, so Lawton called to come on and started off on a trot. I am not much of a footracer myself, but I managed to waddle along behind Lawton all right while he set the pace. The tracks were easy to follow. What passengers got on and off the late passenger train did not cut up the snow any west of the depot, and the tracks circled off west from the depot, a trail easy to see in the hazy moonlight.

"We followed them west to the yards, about a quarter of a mile. There we had a little trouble because some of the night trainmen, coming off their runs, had tracked up the snow at the yard end. But Lawton seemed to have the instincts of a trail hound, and he soon had the 'scent,' and lurched off at an angle from the right of way, all the time waving his hand for me to come on. I puffed out for him to go slower, as I was just about winded, so we settled down to a walk.

"It was plain that the leery operator had hit for the open. In my estimation this made it all the more apparent that he had gone wrong in the head, so we decided to follow the trail to its end if it took all night. On and on we plowed, across fields, across gullies, up hills, through bushes, till I thought I would have to give up the ghost, but I managed to keep my propellers moving. It was plain that Conner was making faster time than we were, because he was taking about one stride to my two. If Lawton had been alone he probably would have run him down in short meter, but I was too fat for that kind of steeplechasing—a steady walk was fast enough for me. We trudged on through the snow for half an hour at least. The cold nipped our ears. Occasionally a rabbit started off from under our feet, and once we kicked into a covey of quails that whirred off into the night with a sudden

roar that made my heart jump up and shake hands with my thorax. Once, right at a barbed wire fence, Lawton surprised me by stopping suddenly. He bent over and scrutinizing the ground closely, 'Look here,' he said, 'that chump didn't see the fence, and butted into it.'

"It was plain that Conner had walked into the fence and the recoil had sent him back full length on the snow. We suspected he had cut himself on the barbs, because after that we occasionally noticed dark spots on the snow that we took for blood.

"We must have traveled three or four miles when the tracks led us through a little strip of woodland, down across a frozen creek. As we climbed up the opposite bank, Lawton again stopped and waited for me to catch up,

"'See that print? Conner sat down to rest, or give out and fell down, one of the two,' Lawton suspected, because of the depression in the snow.

"We went a hundred rods or so further, and another impression in the snow showed that Conner had again fallen. 'He's getting fagged out,' Lawton said. 'See how zigzag his steps are now?'

"It was evident the poor devil was almost exhausted. Another hundred rods had been covered. Lawton suddenly stumbled as though avoiding to step on something. He

96 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

waved his hand with a sudden motion, shoving me off the path, and said, 'Look out! Don't step on him.'

"We were still in the woods. It was not as light as on the open prairie, but by looking closely I could see a man's form lying face downward in the snow. The falling flakes had almost covered him since he fell. In an instant Lawton had raised the unconscious man to a sitting posture and shook him in effort to revive him, but Conner didn't open his eyes. We then waited a minute, hardly knowing what to do. I never felt so lonely in all my life as I did that minute, when I looked about me in the frigid timber and saw those stark, bare trees all about me, and not a sound anywhere save the gentle rustle of the falling snow as it brushed against the branches.

"The long walk had warmed me up considerably about the body, but we couldn't help knowing it was mighty cold. Afterwards we found that the thermometer dropped to twenty below zero that night, and I have been thankful ever since that the wind wasn't blowing. If it had been I don't believe any of us three would ever have gotten back to town without being carried in as chunks of ice and jobs for the undertaker. It came close enough to that the way it was. And yet had the wind been

blowing we might have kept track of the directions a little better than we did.

"Well, our friend Conner was in a pretty bad fix, we could see right away. His head hung down limp on his neck, and we couldn't rouse him. I was down on my knees, rubbin' Conner's hands to beat the band, when Lawton jumped up with an exclamation that like to scared me to death. 'What luck!' he joyfully exclaimed, and he reached his hand to his hip pocket as though he were going to pull a six-shooter. He had me guessing for a minute. I was about to ask him what he was going to shoot, when, after considerable fumbling, he pulled from his hip-pocket a pint flask.

"'That's full of whiskey,' he said. 'Just the thing. I'd forgot all about having it.' And right then was the only time I ever thanked the Lord that some men believe in drinking whiskey.

"We turned Conner's pale, sunken face skyward; I held his mouth open, and Lawton poured three or four swallows of whiskey down his goozle. It was then we first noticed that his right cheek was covered with blood. There was a ragged, shallow gash across it where the barbed wire had snagged him. When I let go his head, it fell like a sack of meal to his breast. Gee, I felt blue. We could feel Conner's heart beat, and he

98 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

breathed lightly, but we couldn't wake him. I took off my big overcoat and wrapped Conner up in it, and we found his hat half-hidden in the snow. Then we poured some more whiskey down him, and he began to warm up—sort o' held his head up and pursed his lips. Finally he opened his big, stary eyes and blinked them uncertainly. We spoke to him, He looked at me, and then at Lawton, his eyes dropped, and he tried to say something, but we couldn't understand. He soon looked up again, and in a draggy voice he mumbled: 'That you, Mac? Where in 'll am I, Mac?'

"We tried to tell him he was all right. At length he got to feelin' pretty spry for a dead man, and all of a sudden he seemed to recall the reason for running away, and began moaning about that lap-order at Kenton. We just couldn't keep him quiet.

"'You won't tell where I am, 'll y', Mac? I'll just quit m' job, but I do'n wan' 'em t' fin' me. You won' tell 'em, will y', Mac?' he begged, and had the haunted expression about the eyes that made me shudder. I assured him I wouldn't tell, and then he wanted to know about the wreck. I tried to tell him there was none, just to pacify him, and he said, 'O! wha' d' y' wan' t' lie t' me for, Mac: I got th' message; said it was a bad 'un. And it was all my fault.' He cried like a child. He insisted there was a wreck, so I let him

have his way, and told him no one was hurt, though. Well, that seemed to ease his mind a whole lot. Of course it was all made up on my part. Yet he kept up a sort of half-delirious mumble, grieving to himself about lap-orders, lap-orders and railroad wrecks.

“We started back to town, but Conner didn’t want to go. We stood him up, and he would lay down on us every time he got a chance, so I just took him up in my arms and carried him, and Lawton leading the line of march, we began retracing the tracks back to town.

“We hadn’t gone far when I noticed that Lawton was having a hard time finding the trail. Sometimes he would stop and look down close to the snow. Finally he stopped short and said: ‘Mac, we’re in it. Snow’s covered the tracks all up.’ From the way Lawton spoke I was certain he was worried. He asked me if I knew the country, and I had to tell him I didn’t know any more about the way the land lay than a mule knows about geography. He studied a while, and remarked: “Well, now, I believe Connor struck off northwest from town. Which way’s north, Mac?’ with a sort of troubled quaver in his voice.

“Right then I got a full apprehension that we were lost on the prairie, and I tell you it was a mighty mean sensation, too. I made

a guess at the directions, and pointed where I thought north ought to be.

“‘Nop,’ said Lawton. ‘Believe it’s off that way.’ We differed about thirty degrees, but I imagined Lawton was more liable to be right than I was, so I told him to lead off.

“If you ever carried a man, you perhaps know something about what kind of a proposition it is. As I said a while ago, Conner was a featherweight, but that night he felt as heavy as an elephant to me. We took turns carryin’ the poor devil, and had been trudgin’ along quite a while, when Lawton brought the crowd to a stop for overhauling. He was feeling one of his ears, and turning to me: ‘Mac, said he, ‘my right ear’s froze.’ He then felt of mine, and asked if I could feel it. He said he pinched them, but it was all news to me. I couldn’t feel it. My ears were frostbitten, and Conner’s, Gee! his ears were swollen up twice their natural size, and his nose looked frozen, too. None of us had gloves. My hands were as numb as so much wood.

“We decided to walk Conner. Each took a little drag on the whiskey flask, and that whipped us up a good bit. We had to work out old Conner, or he would have frozen to death on our hands. So each put a shoulder under one of Conner’s arms, and went on, Lawton directin’ the way.

“The position was powerfully uncomforta-

ble to me, because I was a bit taller than either of the other fellows. Conner was in a half-stupor, but kept his feet moving most of the time. Often he would want to sink down, and Lawton would jab him in the ribs and shake him like a terrier would a rat, and it had a good effect.

"Well, the long and short of it was, we were just as much lost as Little Bo-Peep's wandering sheep. There were mighty few farm houses about this old burg then. The country was mostly open, with a good many fences widely scattered. Generally the fences were around big cattle ranges, and a fellow could travel miles and miles at a time without running into any barbed wire.

"After an hour or more of weary traveling we ran on to a wire fence. Then, fifty feet the other side of it, was another fence running parallel with it, and we were mighty happy over the fact that we had found a road. The question now was, which was the way to town? Fact is, we found out the road didn't lead to town at all, but ran north and south, parallel with town. We didn't know straight up about directions right then, and Lawton and I both realized it with a lost, creepy sensation.

"'Which way, Mac? We'll probably find a house along the road somewhere,' Lawton asked, after reaching the roadway.

"'Well,' says I, 'we'll have to trust to luck.

I broke off a couple of stems from a nearby shrub, and with fingers as numb and cold as iceboxes, I held the twigs to Lawton and said: 'You draw, and if you get the short one, it's that way, and the long one will mean the other.' Lawton drew the short one, and we started out again in accordance with the draw. By this time the moonlight was pretty nearly all gone, and the snow fall was letting up. We were trudging then through about six inches of snow, and our feet were wet as sop, for it don't make any difference how cold it is, the snow will melt on a fellow's shoes when he is walkin'. I was getting mighty cold and numb. My ears had frosted up and popped, so had Lawton's. As for Conner, he would have frozen stiff as a board long before if we hadn't dragged him along and made him exercise, whether he wanted to or not, and kept him bundled up well.

"Pretty soon I began calling for rest every few minutes. My eyes shut voluntarily; the fatigue was on me good and hard. Soon I wanted to lie down in the snow and be allowed to rest just a minute, but Lawton wouldn't let me. I guess he realized I was in that partly froze-to-death stage, and he insisted that I put on my overcoat and let Conner take his (Lawton's), but I fought against it. I could hardly lug myself, let alone that big overcoat. Lawton seemed to stand it first rate, but I was

too fat. He was a lithely-built fellow, weighed about one-sixty, I guess, and was somewhat of an athlete. I noticed that Lawton didn't take any more of the whiskey, because there was only a little left, but every once in a while he would stimulate Conner and me with a swig. After the liquor was all gone, it looked like a pretty hopeless case for Conner and myself.

"We saw readily that we were not on the way to town. It seemed like we had traveled enough to reach town half a dozen times, so when we came to a crossroads, Lawton said we would try our luck again, and we turned to the right. Lawton looked at his watch and it was then after three o'clock. Lawton was due back to the ticket office to sell tickets for the 3.30 o'clock train, but the ticket office wasn't opened again that night, and Lawton heard about it later, too. I had to do some tall 'personal work' with the officials to convince them Lawton should not be fired. He managed to hold his job.

"I don't remember much about that trip after we turned the corner, but Lawton told me about it afterwards. I remember Conner was delirious as a fool, and at times would fight and curse and shout, but Lawton managed to keep him on his feet by carryin' him and draggin' him part of the time. Lawton already had made me quit helpin' Conner, be-

104 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

cause I certainly was 'all in' myself. I have a faint recollection of how once I went down in a heap in the snow, and it felt just like a feather bed. If any one had offered me a thousand to get up right then, I wouldn't have done it. I have since learned that that condition is a very dangerous state for a cold, lost man, as it is the last stage before freezing to death, unless some one arouses him. That was where Lawton shined. He kicked me and beat me, he afterwards told me, but I could hardly feel him. He says he slapped me in the face and churned me like he would a puchin' bag, and I just cussed a blue streak and finally jumped up and was going to whip him for not leavin' me alone. When I did get up, though, Lawton decoyed me on. 'Mac,' he said, 'see that house right over there with a light in it? Come on, we're pretty near there now. Come, on, old boy.'

"And Lawton says I told him I saw it, too, and jogged along, seemed like a hundred years, and Lawton again pointed out the phantom house and told me the house was just a little way ahead, so I fagged on. Lawton was just house. He just tried to make me think one running the razzle on me. He didn't see any was near, to encourage me to stay on my feet. But the next time I went down in the snow all the beating and pummeling and shovin' snow down my neck didn't arouse me.

"Lawton stretched me out on my big overcoat, lay Conner, in Lawton's overcoat, flat on top of me, in cold storage, I guess, thinking we would sort o' keep each other warm, and I think he did the right thing. Both Conner and I were in a sound stupor, most frozen to death, and Lawton, the brave little chap, had to leave us there, and he went on, hoping against hope, to find some one to help us out.

"Luck did come our way once that night, for a few hundred yards ahead of where we corpses were stacked up, Lawton ran on to a farmer's house. He managed to rouse the household, and after a brief explanation on Lawton's part he and two men came after and took care of us.

"Lawton wasn't froze up very badly except his ears and hands. They took Conner and me, stripped all our clothes off, stretched us out on the cold kitchen floor, and after they got the blood to circulating enough to bring me to my senses, Lawton and the whole blessed family were rubbing Conner with snow, as though they were tryin' to scour our hides off. Lawton said they worked with Conner most of the night before he came around. After I came to they poured some hot drinks down my throat, wrapped me up in blankets, and next day I was feelin' a whole lot more like a man than an icicle, but still pretty bummy. After we had been in the railroad hospital three

106 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

days, I believe, they 'O K'd' me, and I was feelin' myself again. But it went hard with Conner. They had to amputate one of his legs, it was so badly frozen. The doctor said he was a nervous wreck—not crazy; his brain wasn't permanently affected.

"By the time Conner was able to leave the hospital he plainly showed his oats. While there he had plenty of time to rest, and he fattened up considerably, until he outgrew that ghost-like appearance. The office men raised a fifty-dollar purse, got him a pass to California, and the old boy really took a pleasure trip. He said it was the first vacation he had taken in six years.

"Oh, yes, and about that lap-order and wreck. There wasn't any wreck at all. I investigated the matter thoroughly, just out of curiosity, and learned from Kenton that no message about a lap-order had been sent from or received at Kenton. It was wholly a fabrication of Conner's upset brain; think he just took a little nap and dreamed it all so vividly he thought it was true. Anyhow, that's the way the head doctor at the hospital figured it. You know Conner didn't have any business making train orders anyhow. He was only an operator then.

"Well, to get around to the point of the story, the operators' tobacco-breakin' experiment on Conner was a sheer failure. That

'No Smoking Allowed' sign mysteriously disappeared right away after Conner's runaway in the snow storm. The next time we saw Conner was the day he came back from California. When he flitted into the upstairs office on his crutches, he was, as ever, smokin' his old cob pipe, and before he even had said 'Hello!' or we were aware he was in the room, he called out happily, 'Say, Mac, what's gone with that smokin' sign?'

"What impressed him most on entering the room was the sign's absence. Of course, greetings were in order, and after a prolonged bunch of 'Hello, Conner,' was strung out, one of the operators, in a matter-of-fact tone, said, 'Why, Conner, the superintendent reconsidered his order and had the sign taken down. You can smoke your old pipe till the roof burns off.'

"And Conner did, too. He took back his old trick and evidently because of the 'superintendent's' withdrawal of the 'no smoking' order, Conner was the happiest man on the division, and what made him happier yet was the present the boys donated of one dozen corncob pipes and enough straight-cut to keep his old weed-burner hot for the next six months. It was certainly a graceful way of acknowledging their failure to break him of the smoking habit.

"The last time I saw Conner was several

108 The Lap-Order at Kenton.

years ago. He was then dispatcher on the Santa Fé at Topeka, and I might as well add that he was still puffin' away on an old cob smoker; was lookin' well for Conner, and said he was taking a month's vacation every year."

THAT "SPOTTER" DEAL.

A NUMBER of trainmen were congregated in the trainmen's lobby of a Santa Fé division point. Time never hangs very heavy around a crowd of railroad men. Now, as usual, their various experiences of out-of-ordinary nature were the subject of conversation. Two of the company had recently been "up on the carpet" for insubordination. Conductor Effingham, an "old timer," culminated the tale of the unfortunates' grievances by moralizing. As half the railroad man's battle he laid down in his original way, the sound, unpretentious advice: "Well, I never did have much trouble with the brass collars. I always found it was the best plan to let the officials do the talkin' and the balkin', and for me to swallow anything they had to say, and look as wise as an owl masticating brain food."

All agreed, and then the conversation took a happy turn, because Conductor Tom Ranson turned it. He ventured, in reply to Effingham: "Yes, but you came so near having trouble over that 'spotter' deal out at Dodge

City that you lost about a month's growth, I have a sneakin' idea. Remember that deal?" And Effingham and the questioner laughed uproariously. "Effy" needed no further explanation to bring vividly back to mind that "spotter" deal.

"Well, sir, Tom, that certainly was the most seriously comical thing that I was ever mixed up in. Let's see; you were braking for me then, weren't you, Tom? Yes, you rascal! You were the one that backed me into that racket," jokingly explained Effingham, and Ranson, laughing in his sleeve, acquiesced.

It was a story that never had been told. That was a strict agreement. Had it been noised about enough to have reached the ear drums of the officials it might have echoed back in the shape of two sets of discharge papers.

"But that was ten years ago, wasn't it, Tom? Twelve? You sure? Yes, I guess you're right. Goodness, time goes faster than money. Yes, it was thirteen years ago next month when I took out my first train, and I had just about a year's whiskers when we landed on that spotter. Now, Tom, I see we've got these fellers' curiosity all worked up to high pressure. If you say it isn't breakin' our promise to keep that mum, I'll tell it. Of course there is no danger in it now, it was so long ago."

So "Effy" started the fireworks.

"Well, that 'spotter' deal, as Tom mentioned, happened way out on the Western Grand Division. I was running out of Dodge City, and Tom was my head brakeman. In those old days Western Kansas was certainly wild and woolly. There was a terrible lot of drinkin' going on among the men. No, they didn't drink—they all belonged to the funnel gang—and I'll admit that 'spotters' were a mighty necessary evil to weed out the booze soppin' broncho busters and desperadoes who chased in off the prairies and tried their hand at rail-roading. Tom, you remember the time old 'Shorty' Kraus got on a high lonesome and shot up the town? O! there were some bold, bad men on the Santa Fé in those old days. 'Shorty' had the police and most of the good citizens in the tall timber until his ammunition gave out. Kraus was a brakey, and the last bad break he made was to shoot the air on the main street so full of holes you could strain milk through it.

"But about that 'spotter.' I'll admit I wasn't on to the ropes any too good then. I was just a young head, and didn't know a 'spotter' from a Hamburg steak. I had caught a passenger run that day. Old Bill Simpson brought the train into Dodge from Newton. Most of you 'old timers' remember old 'Sambo.' He was honestly the biggest clown

I ever saw running at large, outside of a circus. Bill was a joker from Jokersville. Well, when I met Bill that day and saw the grin in the corner of his eyes, I knew something was up. Bill had a kind of wolf-in-sheep's-duds smile that one could read like a book.

"Well, I asked Bill what was——"

"Ah, come in out of the rain, 'Effy,' and tell 'em about that lop-eared 'spotter,' or I will," interrupted Conductor Ranson impatiently.

"Don't run ahead of your orders there, young fellow," cautioned Effingham. "Don't you know we haven't told 'em about that bank bustin' at Garden City yet. Well, as I was sayin', Sampson came up beaming like a kid with his first bunch of firecrackers, wrapped his lanky arm two or three times around my neck—that was a confidential way Sampson had of meetin' a feller—and from the way he sputtered close up to my ear, I guessed it that his mouth must have been some relation to an electric fountain. He confided to me that there was a sure 'nough 'spotter' on the train and told me to come take a peep at him through the coach door.

"'Course I got curious and followed suit. Bill went on to tell me how I could always know that 'spotter,' no matter whether he was disguised as a quack doctor or a Hottentot. His lop ear gave 'way on him. And, true

enough, the 'spotter's' right ear hung out from the side of his head like a full-blown flag at half mast. That day the old boy had on a face full of whiskers and a head of hair, all so red he couldn't walk down the middle of the track without giving the danger signal. I never would have guessed it, but Bill said the hair and whiskers were false, and Bill knew. So you see, with all this artificial plumage the old 'spotter' was a mighty good imitation of a suspicious character.

"And now about that bank robbery. You see, all the officers were lookin' for suspicious characters. That's why the 'spotter' got his foot in it. The bank at Garden City, second county seat west of Dodge, had been touched up for about \$10,000 the night before by bank robbers; blew the daylights and night watches out of the safe, and made a clean git-away with the goods. 'Course the 'spotter' didn't know about the bank robbery. Y' see, old Bill thought the 'spotter,' in th' kind of a garb he was rigged out in would be a good picture of a bank robber, so he didn't do a thing after plannin' his scheme, but slip a piece of paper in a plain envelope into the 'spotter's' pocket without him a-knowin' it. The writin' on the slip of paper read somethin' like this: 'Mike—We made a clean haul at Garden C. last night for \$10,000. Come down to La Junta to help

me spend it. Come Friday. Keep mum. SPUDGE.'

"Of course Bill had put the letter in the 'spotter's' clothes before the train reached Dodge City. There he told me the rest of his plot was to wire the marshal of Garden City, who was lookin' hard for bank robbers, to meet the train and take charge of a suspicious character that was on it. I sort o' backed down on the proposition; was a little leery of it; but Tommy, there, as I told you a while ago, told me where to head in, 'nd we shoved through that plot as fast as a president's special on a greased track.

"So I chased one over the wire to the Garden City marshal something like this: 'May be bank robber aboard. Meet No. 5 at Garden City.' And the marshal sure was there, 'Johnnie on the spot,' at Garden City. He told me very wisely that he was expectin' the robbers to double back on their tracks and blow right back from where they started. The marshal put on such confidential airs about how he knew he would catch the robbers, that I couldn't hardly keep from laughin' in his face. Well, I pointed out the lop-eared 'spotter' to the officer as the suspected bank robber, and Mr. Spotter was suddenly in the hooks of the law, and in spite of his windy protests he was hustled off to the county jail, after the marshal had incidentally jerked off the false hair and

whiskers just to show the 'spotter' he was a counterfeit article.

"'Course I wasn't supposed to know anything about him bein' a 'spotter,' so I kept mum and refused to interfere. And, don't y' know, those false whiskers and the letter Sampson put in the 'spotter's' pocket came mighty near sending the 'spotter' over the road for bank robbery. The railroad brass collars insisted on his release, and the Garden City officers were bound to try and convict him for dynamiting their bank. I think he managed to prove an alibi by showing that he hung out at a Newton hotel the night of the bank robbery. But, anyhow, they (I guess I mean we) made it so warm for the 'spotter' on the bank robbery deal that he never flung his flop ear to the breeze on that division again.

"But where our grief came in was about that letter. It was plain to the officials that it all was a put-up job on the 'spotter,' and as Sampson and I had charge of the train while the detective was on it, it was up to us to explain. But we were in hot water plum up to our eyes, and when it came to a show down, to save me from unpleasant complications, old Bill Sampson, the honest old soul, went and 'fessed up like a good Injun. You bet yer calf skins Bill and his job parted company. Bill was fired so high he didn't light again on the Santa Fé. Pretty costly joke; but Bill

was game about it; always said he got his money's worth out of his hocus game, and y' bet your mother's jewelry, the 'spotter' did, too. And that's the fairy tale about me and the 'spotter.' "

"Yes, and y' left off the sequel," added Tom Ranson, apparently confident that the best part of the story had been omitted.

"You've got the right of way, Tommy; go ahead. What's the rest of it?" consented Effingham.

"You didn't tell them what old Bill Sampson's doin' now."

"Last I heard of Bill he was switchin' on the Frisco out of Kansas City. Isn't he there yet?" asked Effingham.

"Naw," bawled Tom R. "Old Sampson is a 'spotter' himself out at Denver, on the Santa Fé."

THE FOREMAN'S ORDER.

BIG-HEADED, domineering and loud-mouthed, Division Foreman R. T. Ruggley was the most disliked man on the division. It was easy figuring how he got his job—he was the master mechanic's brother-in-law; but how he managed to hold it, even in view of the official position of his kin was a problem the engine men were unable to see through. Their solutions of the whole situation were identical—the division foreman's head ought "to go off."

Ruggley, before he stepped into the division foreman's shoes, was an engineer with a bad record. But it is ever the same in railroading. The man with a pull will inevitably outstrip the fellow with competence as his only promoter. The engine men wanted Engineer Jaques to get the job, and it was a contest between Jaques and Ruggley—a one-sided contest. Ruggley had a pull; Jaques didn't. Ruggley and Jaques never did have any love lost between them. Jaques and all the rest of the men who cared a snap for their jobs, would go a block out of their way to avoid having

any words with the division foreman. To this general rule, however, old Bill Coleson once proved to be an exception. He was a big six-footer of Swedish descent, who never had very much to say. Just once Coleson was so overprovoked in an interview with the foreman that he didn't care whether he had a job or not, and hauled off and flogged Foreman Ruggley in so decisive a manner that for a week afterwards one of Ruggley's eyes looked like the moon in total eclipse. Coleson pummeled the foreman and didn't demand any investigation either, he just quit his job. But as for Jaques, silence was king when Ruggley was in sight.

It was the first week in September when Ruggley and Jaques had the regulation "few words and parted," all because the engineer positively refused to go over the division with a train and the 877; but he was well aware that the step he took was the right. The 877 was a new switch engine going west for service at a division point. As were most switch engines, it had been built without any trailers, and Jaques informed the foreman that he would as soon ride an engine without a throttle as pull a train on an engine like the 877 with no trailer wheels. In Jaques's time he had seen it tried. With no trailer wheels the engine is liable to rock like a "teeter-totter" board if she is put to any speed; and that means danger.

However, it was up to Jaques either to take out the 877 or send in his time, and Jaques asked for his time. The engineers on the engine board were shoved up a notch, and Tommy Crayton caught the run with the 877. Tommy was a young head. He had been running an engine but eight months, and was one of the most promising young men on the road. However, it never had been Tommy's experience to run an engine without trailers. He did not know the "teeter-totter" tricks any more than the division foreman did. Switch engines usually went over the road "light"—without any trains; but in this case the foreman explained. It was the rush season and not a pound of power could be wasted, so Tommy, his fireman and the 877 started out ahead of a train while the foreman stalked about the engine men's lobby loudly "glass blowing" about the Jaques affair and insubordination. Jaques's discharge had been filed, and would be recorded at headquarters before the 877 reached the end of the division.

Ruggley was still in the engine-men's room a half an hour later when his clerk brought in a message that made the foreman's cheek turn pale as he glanced over the slip of paper. He did not read the message to the engine men in the room at the time. He stopped talking and left the room immediately. It was not long, however, till the contents of the message were

generally known about the division point. Some said they would not believe it. When Jaques heard the news he said little, but his heart bled, and at the same time turned cold with wrath. Bled for poor Tommy Crayton and turned cold with wrath at the fool foreman who ordered an engine crew over the road with a train and the 877.

Jaques went to the operator's room and hovered over the ticking brass, awaiting further news from Tommy. It came soon. The message read: "Crayton will die. He asks for his wife. Inform her so she can come on No. 111. Fireman Hottle jumped; his leg was broken." The operator handed Jaques the message, and only said, "You tell her, Jaques." The engineer stood still, rereading the message, then walked away slowly and repeatedly drew his coat sleeve across his eyes. Jaques did his duty by breaking the news, but it was as hard a task as he ever did. He didn't go to the wreck, but in his mind he could see that pathetic picture; how the little spark of a brave life lingered, flickered and went out.

Tommy's funeral was held two days later, but Ruggley did not attend. He was out of town on business. At the investigation over the wreck, Jaques, who until then had held his peace, appeared as the principal witness, although he had been duly discharged by Fore-

man Ruggley. Tommy Crayton's fireman, of course, was not able to attend the investigation. A deposition from him had been prepared by a stenographer and was in evidence at the "kangaroo court" before the officials. It related how on that fatal trip the 877 began to rock, up and down, and almost before they were aware of the motion the locomotive left the track at a curve and headed into the ditch. The engine rolled over, down the embankment and poor Tommy Crayton, with hand on the air lever, was caught at the bottom of the pile. As the engine rolled off one side of the track the fireman jumped the opposite way and got off easy with a broken leg.

There was some questioning among the court as to who was to blame, until Jaques was heard. He gave the officials a few pointers on the necessity of trailer wheels on road engines; also touched on his own case—his being fired. The officials then made a clean breast of it. Full responsibility for the wreck was laid on Ruggley's shoulders. The kindred ties on which his foremanship was spiked were overlooked. Division Foreman Ruggley lost his job,—and Jaques? Well, he hasn't been running an engine since Ruggley discharged him. Since then Jaques has been the engine-men's boss as Ruggley's successor.

THE END.

BOOKS YOU MUST READ SOONER OR LATER

Llewellyn

A NOVEL

BY HADLEY S. KIMBERLING.

Cloth. \$1.50.

5 Illustrations by S. Klarr.

Here is a story whose artistic realism will appeal to everyone, while its distinction as a serious novel is made evident by its clever analysis, sparkling dialogue and thrilling and powerful situations. "Llewellyn" will win all hearts by her purity and charm.

Satan of the Modern World

BY E. G. DOYEN.

12mo, cloth, handsomely produced.

\$1.50.

The title of this book will arouse curiosity, and its brilliant contents will fully reward the wide public which it will reach.

A Missourian's Honor

BY W. W. ARNOLD.

Cloth, 12mo. \$1.00.

3 Illustrations.

BOOKS YOU MUST READ SOONER OR LATER

Told at Twilight

BY EVA BROWNE.

A delightful collection of stories and poems.

(Author's photo.)

\$1.00.

Job Trotter

BY SYLVESTER FIELD.

50c.

A unique work, proving that the "earthly paradise" of the colored race is Africa. This book is decidedly the best work that has yet appeared on the subject.

The Sin of Ignorance

BY HENRIETTA SIEGEL.

\$1.00.

An exceedingly clever story, by a New York girl, who pictures with a fearless hand the domestic misery resulting from drink and dissipation.

(4 special drawings.)

APR 6 1965

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00023159089